Truly yr. friend
Wm. Woodbridge

THE LIFE

OF

WILLIAM WOODBRIDGE.

BY

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LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

William Woodbridge was born in Norwich, Connecticut, on the 20th of August, 1780. His father, Dudley Woodbridge, Esq., was a graduate of Yale College, and educated for the Bar; but about the time of his admission, the Revolutionary war broke out, the courts of justice were shut up, and he abandoned his purpose of engaging in professional business. He was one of the "minute men" of his native State during the war; afterwards joined the emigrants to the North Western Territory, and was one of the earliest settlers of Marietta—which was founded in part by another Connecticut man, the distinguished Manasseh Cutler. His family was removed to that place as soon as a residence could be provided for them; except that the three oldest of the children, of whom William was one, were left at school in their native State, until a few months before St. Clair's defeat in 1791, when William was brought home to Marietta. He remained four or five years in the Territory, passing a year of that time at school among the French Colonists at Galliopolis, and became a thorough

master of the French language, when he was again sent back to Connecticut. He remained there at school until 1799, and then rejoined the family at Marietta. He continued at home, pursuing such studies as were deemed proper, and in writing for his father, who had now become engaged in mercantile affairs, until about the time of the formation of the State Government of Ohio. It was at this period that among other studies, he commenced reading law; not at first, with a view to follow it as a profession, but rather as a branch of education, which promised to be of use in the future exigencies of life. But becoming interested in the study, he began to look to it as a desirable occupation for future years; and it is a little singular, that his most intimate fellow student at that period, was nó less a personage than Lewis Cass, both of whom subsequently resided side by side on the Detroit river, and were for nearly half a century the two leading men of Michigan. With the approbation of his parents, he soon afterwards entered as a student the celebrated Law School at Litchfield, Connecticut; at that school he continued nearly three years; when, after a creditable examination, he was admitted as a member of the Bar of Connecticut, and soon after, upon his return to Ohio, he was, early in 1806, admitted to the Bar of that State, and with flattering prospects of success, immediately commenced his professional career.

It has been stated that Mr. Woodbridge was one of three brothers. The oldest, named Dudley, was one of the most accomplished merchants of the day. He it was who had the enterprise and honor of building the first square-rigged vessel that ever descended the Falls of the Ohio. She was a brig named *St. Clair;* and her

master was a worthy man named Whipple. After constructing this vessel at Marietta, he filled it with furs and produce, and taking advantage of a freshet in the Ohio, sent it safely down the Mississippi to France, which venture was eminently successful in all particulars. The youngest son named John, became eminent as a financier, and was for many years the manager of the Bank of Chilicothe. The sisters of this family, of whom there were two, were distinguished for their accomplishments.

Having been born in Connecticut, acquired his education there, and cherishing a deep affection for her character and institutions, it was not strange that, after a few busy months of legal labor, he should have revisited his native State for the purpose of obtaining a wife. On the 29th of June, 1806, he was married at Hartford, to Juliana, a daughter of the Hon. John Trumbull, the able Judge and celebrated author of *McFingal* and other Poems. "Withdrawing," to use his own words, "from the companions of her earlier years; estranging herself from that circle of friends to whom she was so dear; and sundering the yet more solemn and endearing ties which bound her to her father's home, she departed, with none thenceforth to lean upon, but her husband,—for the far distant valley of the Ohio." A part of that long journey was performed on horseback, and to the happy pair must have been full of interest and romance. Their residence in Marietta was commodious and beautiful, the grounds ample, and about them were gathered as many of the elegancies of life, as could be brought together in a frontier settlement. Although the contrast was not small, at that time, between the refinements and intellectual character of society in Hartford, and the asperities and privations of "Border life," yet, sur-

rounded as they were by warm-hearted friends, and at least all the substantial comforts of life, everything seemed to promise a happy future.

In 1807, Mr. Woodbridge was sent, as a Representative, to the General Assembly of Ohio. It was the year of the Impeachment and trial of the Judges, for deciding an act of a previous Legislature, enlarging the jurisdiction of Justices of the Peace, and taking away the right of Jury trial, to be unconstitutional and void. Mr. Woodbridge took a very active, but an unsuccessful part, in opposing those Impeachments; upon their trials, all the Impeachments failed; and the Judges were honorably acquitted. Early in 1808, the office of Prosecuting Attorney, for the county in which he resided, was conferred upon him, and this he continued to hold until his removal from the State. His professional business, had otherwise greatly increased; and deeming it unwise to absent himself so much from his home and professional pursuits, as an attendance upon the Legislature would induce, he declined being a candidate for the succeeding Legislature. But nevertheless, he was at the fall election for 1809 chosen as a member of the State Senate; and continued, by repeated re-elections, to be a member of that body until he removed from the State. It will be readily imagined, that in the Legislature of a State just emerging into independency, when all things are new, when its institutions are first to be established, its interests to be developed, and the first impulse to be given to its onward course, questions must arise greatly involving its future prosperity, and consequently implying a heavy responsibility on the part of those who may be selected as its Law Makers. Such was unquestionably the condition of Ohio at that early period. But

this is not the place to review in detail such questions. It is perhaps sufficient to say here that during the whole period of his service in the Legislature of Ohio, Mr. Woodbridge participated actively in the work of building up and strengthening its institutions, and in all its important Legislative transactions. In 1812 he drew up a Declaration and Resolutions, which passed the two houses of the Legislature unanimously and attracted great attention, endorsing, in the strongest and most emphatic terms, the war measures of President Madison. While thus dividing his time and labor, between the public duties which devolved upon him, and those connected with his profession, a circumstance occurred, which, bringing into question the practical construction of a provision contained in the Constitution of the United States, it may not be out of place to mention.

Mr. Woodbridge's residence, as has been said, was at Marietta, where the Muskingham unites with the Ohio; separated from Wood County, Virginia, by a narrow river only, he was sometimes applied to by citizens of that State, for professional advice and aid. His acquaintance there being very general, it became an object of individual interest to him,—if he properly could,—to become admitted to practice in the courts of that State. The laws of Virginia then required, that the applicant for admission, should obtain a certificate from "the Justices of the County Court, of that county in which he has usually resided for the last preceding twelve months," touching his age, his moral character, &c. Mr. Woodbridge had never lived in Virginia. But the Justices of the County Court, upon argument, were of opinion that, as the *fact* of a *residence* there, was not, by the terms of the law, required to be certified to; and as the

clause in question seemed intended solely to guard against the improvident granting of such certificates to persons not *sufficiently* and *personally* known to the members of the court, it might, by fair rules of construction, be quite competent for them, under the law, to grant the required voucher to a person long resident in the immediate neighborhood, and with whom they had, for many years been *personally* acquainted. They therefore cheerfully granted the certificate required. The legal effect of that certificate, was simply to authorize an examination of the candidate by three of the highest Judicial Officers of the State; and, if that examination proved satisfactory, the further certificate of those three Judges, gave the applicant the right to admission, upon his taking the oath of office. The ordeal so far, had been passed, but then a new difficulty arose. The Statutes of Virginia had prescribed the *form* of the oath to be administered. It comprised not only the oath of office, properly speaking; but a positive declaration that the applicant was actually a citizen of Virginia. This declaration he could not make, for it was contrary to the fact. But he nevertheless claimed to be sworn in; and that the declaration of citizenship should be omitted. This claim was based upon the provision of the second section of the fourth article of the Constitution of the United States, which purports to grant to "the citizens of each State, all privileges and immunities, of citizens in the several States." The question was raised in the Supreme Court, then holden in Wood County, and was considered important. The clause in the Constitution alluded to was not known to have received anywhere, a judicial or practical construction; and it appearing to the Judge (Smith or Wilson) to be both "novel and

difficult," it was reserved and taken, according to the custom of the court, to the General Court of the Commonwealth of Virginia at Richmond, for its "advice and discretion." The Superior Judge, who afterwards held the court in Wood County, was pleased to advise him, that a majority of the Judges of the General Court had fully sustained the construction for which Mr. Woodbridge had contended, and the oath *omitting* the declaration of citizenship, was directed, upon his application, to be administered. This decision, however, was not made known to him, until about the time he left that part of the country, and he never afterwards had occasion to claim its benefit.

About forty-five years after the period just alluded to, the citizens of Marietta celebrated in a becoming manner the seventieth anniversary of the settlement of their town; and among those who were invited to be present, from abroad, was Mr. Woodbridge. He could not accept the invitation, but he sent a letter to the friends of his youth, in Marietta, in which he thus alluded to his early home:—

"This is the country of my childhood, and of my middle life. It was the home of my revered father, and of my sainted mother. It was the dwelling place of beloved sisters, and of estimable brothers; one of whom has but recently departed from you; whom you all knew and esteemed, for his life was passed among you in acts of benevolence and christian charity to the end. This was the home, too, of kind-hearted fellow-citizens, who first, a long time ago, took me by the hand, led me forward into public life, and upon whose favors I leaned for support, and to whose unshaken confidence I owe, in a great measure, what little of distinction I may have

acquired as a public man. It will not, then, be deemed arrogant in me, I trust, that I too should claim a common interest in that great event which you have assembled here to celebrate." And another passage from the same letter, published elsewhere in full, is as follows: "And blessed be the memory of those who first transplanted into the *Great West*, the New England system of popular education! That was a system *sui generis*. There was nothing like it; and to a free people, who would seek to *preserve* their freedom through all future time, in its pristine purity and vigor, it was indispensible. What organized band of Puritans, indeed, have been known to migrate without the school master in their train? The school lands had not yet become available; but other resources were applied; and from the first establishment of the colony, there was no want unsupplied, of well conducted schools. The Block-houses at "the point" were built as I have already stated, as places of protection, and as means of defence. One of them was usually occupied, on the Sabbath, as a house of prayer. It was not an undue desecration of it, I think, that, on *other* days, it should be used for a school. A Mr. Baldwin, a graduate, I believe, of one of the Eastern colleges, sent out, I suppose, by the provident curators of the colony, as a teacher, kept school there. Under *his* encouraging tuition, (for I was one of his little pupils,) I was myself enabled to blunder through some of the elementary rules of grammar, and to struggle through with varying success, against that formidable monster the multiplication table. He was an amiable man, and much beloved by all his pupils; and withal, at least in *their* untutored judgments, he was a man of prodigious learning,

"And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew,
That one small head could carry all he knew!"

Where this gentleman moved to, and what was his ultimate destiny, I do not know. At "the Stockade" higher branches of learning were taught, for a time at least, by Major Anselm Tupper, of the old Revolutionary Army. This gentleman had the reputation of being a superior classical scholar, as he certainly possessed a refined and polished address. As the population of the colony expanded, and its settlements within the purchase increased in number, means of education were everywhere abundantly provided; and everywhere within the purchase, the badge of New England people was visible."

CHAPTER II.

Late in the autumn of 1814, Mr. Woodbridge was officially advised of his appointment by President Madison, to be Secretary of the Territory of Michigan. This was a surprise to him, for he had made no application for that, nor for any other appointment, and had received no intimation that *any* person had applied for him. It has been supposed, however, that the nomination came from his early friend Lewis Cass, at that time Governor of Michigan. He hesitated long before accepting the office. The condition of his own health, and that of his family at length determined him. He and his wife needed the bracing influences of a climate, so salubrious as that of Detroit was reputed to be, and he concluded to accept the appointment; at least temporarily, until he should have visited the country, intending to have resigned the office should the attractions of the lake country not be equal to his expectations. He was also called upon at the same time to hold the office and perform the duties of Collector of Customs at Detroit; and in this connection may be mentioned this interesting circumstance. The fleet which, under Commodore Perry in 1813, was so successful in the great Battle of Lake Erie was, for preservation, sunk in the Harbor of Erie; and, by permission of the General Government, one of

these vessels was raised, and performed Revenue service at Detroit, during the whole of Mr. Woodbridge's term as collector of that District.

And here, for the want of a better place, is submitted a brief letter from Mr. Woodbridge to his wife, which gives an admirable idea of the condition of affairs on the Detroit river, a short time after his arrival in the country :—

DETROIT, MICHIGAN TERRITORY,
March 5th, 1815.

MY DEAR J.— * * * * * *

The town of Detroit is by no means so large as from my first letter to you from this place, you might have supposed. The proper town does not include so many houses by any means as Marietta. I was led to an error on this subject, by the circumstance that for two miles below, and at least as many above, there is one continued village, scarcely any place in that distance larger than from our house to our barn intervening between the farm houses. Imagine to yourself a single tier of farms fronting on the strait or river Detroit, having for front of from one and one-half to three square acres, and extending back from thirty to eighty square acres, few of which farms are cleared for a distance greater than one mile back, the houses and buildings placed along the river bank in front of each farm, and you will have some idea of the manner our farms are laid out. They extend in this manner very many miles from the mouth of Detroit river, along lake St. Clair, and up the river Sinclair. The houses are almost universally of one story—most of them have been standing from ten to eighty years—fashioned a little like the houses of the

low Dutch about New York, Long Island, Bergen (in New Jersey,) and I suppose Albany. The inhabitants being mostly Catholics, you see many traces of their religion; for instance, many an old moss-grown crucifix which on their gate posts, barns, or houses have withstood the storms of a century.

The British side of the river, except that you see more traces of modern improvement, greatly resembles this side. The wide river, the points, and the distant islands, look beautifully. The natural beauty of this country will delight you. But of the society—what shall I tell you? One would think that the lives of this people consist in one constant succession of amusements —dances, rides, dinners, card parties, and all the *et cetera* of dissipation, follow in one long train, treading each on the heels of the other!

Tell Jane, in answer to her inquiries, that Mrs. May is a good, religious French lady; that she talks to me always in French, and I to her always in English, and yet that we get along without any sort of quarrelling. Mrs. Sibley and her little family are all well; they live in a snug little one-story house at the upper end of the town. * * * * *

Affectionately yours,

W. Woodbridge.

The Government which prevailed at that time in Michigan was that prescribed in the ordinance of 1787; being what was called its "first grade," i. e., there was no elective Legislature, and the Territory had no Delegate in Congress. But, after some years, the population became sufficiently numerous to authorize it to pass into the "second grade" and consequently to have the

benefit of a Delegate in Congress and a local elective Legislature. But according to the provisions of the ordinance, the expenses of the new Government would have been thrown upon the people. Heavy taxes would have been the consequence. The Territory had recently been in full possession of the enemy, by whom it had been left, despoiled of everything that could be taken away and destroyed, and in a condition of almost hopeless devastation. And the question being put to the people to decide, in 1818, or about that time, a very large majority voted against the change proposed. But the inability or unwillingness of the country to support a more free and acceptable Government, furnished unjust cause for withholding from it the benefits of being represented by a Delegate in Congress; and confiding in the liberal policy of that body, it was hoped that a petition for the grant of that privilege, would be favorably received. An effort had indeed been made, soon after the decisive vote against passing into the second grade of Government, to accomplish that object. At a large assemblage of citizens in Detroit, Mr. Woodbridge had been appointed to correspond with members of Congress on the subject; and when, subsequently, it became generally known that he had proposed, for the first time, to visit the seat of the General Government, he was further empowered by the citizens of the Territory, to solicit personally, in their behalf, a grant of that privilege. The condition of the old Land Titles of the country were also the subject of much solicitude; and very justly, for, notwithstanding the assurances that had been given to the Canadian inhabitants at the time of the surrender of the country, (in virtue of Jay's treaty,) and afterwards, that they should not be disturbed in their possessions, and that

their lands should be confirmed to them, great numbers of that people were left without the power to sustain their claims in the courts, and subject at any time to be dispossessed of their homesteads, at the pleasure of the Government, though many of them had been occupied by their ancestors for a hundred years or more! To these two objects, on his arrival in Washington, Mr. Woodbridge gratuitously and earnestly applied himself. The first one mentioned he succeeded in; and an act of Congress was passed February 16, 1819, authorizing the election of a Delegate. A Bill for investigating and confirming the Land Titles in the Territory was also passed through one of the two Houses of Congress, with a fair prospect for it in the other, but the adjournment took place before it could be finally acted upon. Upon his return to Michigan, and when the results of his mission became generally known, he was at once nominated, without any concurrence on his part, for the office of Delegate. The political condition and the interior police of Michigan, as well as the general operation of its Local Government, were but imperfectly comprehended in Congress; and the region of country then known as Michigan, comprehended the whole domain which was subsequently divided into the States of Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Iowa. The multifarious concerns which always press upon the attention of that body, combined with the remoteness and insolated situation of the Territory, tended to exclude from view all these topics, and its various interests. The Governor and the Judges of the Territory, fully apprized of all these disadvantages, were all desirous that Mr. Woodbridge should accept the tendered nomination, and having done so, he was elected without opposition. He reached

Washington in December, 1819, and duly took his seat as the first Delegate to Congress from the Territory of Michigan.

It has already been intimated, that for a long period, during the war with Great Britain, the whole of the inhabited parts of the Territory were in the possession of the enemy. Everything was laid waste there; desolation and famine took the places of contentment and plenty. The claims of its people upon the liberal justice of the nation, growing out of that condition of things, and resulting from the subsequent operations of the war upon that frontier, were numerous, strong, and of considerable magnitude. They had never before been presented to the Government by any one whose duty it was to seek their enforcement. Unfortunately for the sufferers, the allowances made some years before upon claims which originated on the Niagara frontier, and ostensibly growing out of similiar causes, had been swollen to so enormous an amount, that the Administration had become alarmed. The vigilant jealousy of the nation was awakened. A sentiment of hostility to *all* such claims seemed to pervade the Capitol, and soon extended to all the officers of the Treasury, whose duty it was to investigate them. To defeat a claim indeed,—for losses growing out of the war, and without any scrupulous regard to justice either,—had come to be considered as *evidence of patroitism*, and proof of a commendable regard for the interests of the Treasury. Notwithstanding the unfavorable auspices under which the claims from Michigan were presented, the efforts of Mr. Woodbridge were not fruitless. His efforts in Congress and with the Administration were untiring to secure every possible good for the people of the lake peninsula.

Among the other objects which demanded and received his attention, was that of obtaining some further recognition of the old French Land Titles. From the earliest period of his term, this was made the subject of his continued efforts. The previous legislation of Congress, in relation to these titles, was considered very imperfect. Mr. Woodbridge desired to substitute a more perfect system. But on consultation with the members, especially those who were on the Land Committee, he was induced to forego his own preferences and concluded to present and endeavor to get through *both* Houses, the same bill which had previously passed through one House. The measure succeeded and was followed by most beneficial results.

Separated, as Michigan was, from the settled portions of Ohio by a wide extent of country (so disastrously known during the war with Great Britain as the "Black Swamp") and from other States, on the South West, by an untrodden wilderness, Michigan had continued—down to the period when that war brought it into notice—almost entirely unknown to the people of the United States. For many years, after the peace of 1783, it had remained under the Government of Great Britain, practically a part of Upper Canada. The social and commercial intercourse of its people, was with Canada almost exclusively. To and through that Province, all the artificial roads of the country were constructed; and when the navigation of the lakes was closed by winter, no other lines of intercourse existed. Such a condition of things did not comport with the general safety, as was lamentably demonstrated at the very commencement of the war, for the entire Territory was unquestionably lost by it. Neither did it accord with that

provident care and wise policy which looks to the future and seeks to neutralize all influences which may lead to commercial or political evils. After the delivery of the country to the United States, in 1796, (in view of Jay's treaty,) it was found expedient by the Government to pay a large portion of the annuities accruing to the Indians at and near Detroit. Many of these were payable in merchandize. It too often happened that these payments were delayed; and the answer given to the frequent complaints on account of these delays was, that the goods could not be brought without roads; also, that no roads could be made, because the country through which they must pass belonged to the Indians and not to the United States. This reasoning the Indians could comprehend. It predisposed them to agree to a measure which President Jefferson had projected in 1806, that of constructing a national military road through the swamp. To that end he had directed a treaty to be holden with the tribes who owned the country; the parties to it met at Brownstown, in Michigan, and a grant was obtained of a strip of land for the sole purpose of making the road. Not long after its ratification, Mr. Jefferson left the Presidency, and the object and provisions of the treaty were suffered to rest in forgetfulness, until, in real earnest, the war approached. Then, of course, the importance of such a road forced itself upon the consideration of the Government. Commissioners were appointed to explore the country and to lay out the road. But it was too late, and hostilities were commenced before any progress could be made. After the war, the *whole* of that region of country was obtained from the Indians, and thus the provisions of the treaty of Brownstown as many supposed became

merged in the subsequent treaty. Whether such a construction were *warranted* or not by the terms of the two instruments, it seemed injurious to the general interests, and especially to Michigan. It was the purpose of Mr. Woodbridge, if possible, to revive and give full effect to the design of the first treaty. With that intent, he introduced a resolution into the House of Representatives, as Delegate, directing an inquiry to be made as to "what measures—if any—were necessary, in order to give effect to the provisions of the treaty of Brownstown." Upon his motion it was referred to a select committee of three and Mr. Woodbridge was made chairman, the other members hailing from Ohio. He at once fully explained his views to his associates on the committee, but though their own State was manifestly as much interested as Michigan, they at first looked upon the proposition as wild, visionary, and impracticable. The national character and great importance of the work were indeed conceded, but the Government, as they thought, had no money to spend upon such a work. They also deemed it idle to suppose that sufficient means to construct the road, could be obtained by the sale of the land which had been granted by the Indians for the purpose. This condition of things was painful and embarrassing to Mr. Woodbridge;—and the more so because further reflection had confirmed, rather than weakened his confidence in the practicability, as well as sound policy of the measure. In this emergency it happily occurred to him that the Legislature of Ohio, then in session, might perhaps be induced to consider the project, and lend to it the sanction of its favorable opinion. He wrote to some of his old associates in that body—explaining his plan, and indicating some of the

benefits that would result from it to that State, as well as to the whole North West. His suggestions were well received, and measures were at once taken to elicit the views of the Legislature on the subject. Not doubting what those views would be, his hopes of ultimate success were revived; and suspending all call upon the attention of the House committee, he proceeded to collect the necessary information for a report, which, if the action of the Ohio Legistature should not disappoint him, it was his intention to submit for the consideration of the committee. Joseph Vance, who was afterwards and for many years so efficient a member of Congress from Ohio and Governor of the State was, at the time alluded to, in the General Assembly. From personal observation he was fully acquainted with the topography of that country, and with his own characteristic promptitude and energy, introduced and supported resolutions enforcing strongly the policy of the measure, and these were at once transmitted to the members of Congress from Ohio. They were filled with surprise, and from that period they became earnest advocates of the measure. But the Session was far advanced towards its close, and, in order to increase the chances of success, it was proposed that a resolution relative to the measure, should be presented in the Senate also, so that the matter might progress at the same time in both Houses. Some diversity of opinion also existed as to the expediency of urging a *money* appropriation for the work, without reference to the proceeds of a sale of the land; and it was considered judicious, that while in *one* House the measure should be advocated upon the principle of applying the proceeds of the land granted—and those *only* to the construction of the work—a *money* appropri-

ation should be urged in the other. The matter was accordingly brought forward in the Senate by Benjamin Ruggles, who was assisted in committee by Rufus King, and upon their invitation, Mr. Woodbridge was solicited to give them his views on the subject at issue, and their effect on the committee was salutary. The report prepared by Mr. Woodbridge and read to the House, was fully approved and ordered to be printed, but on account of the approaching close of the Session, final action was delayed. Fortunately for the project, Governor Vance was elected a member of the Congress which was to be holden during the winter of 1820–1, and to his energetic support, as well as to the expositions contained in the House report, was Mr. Woodbridge's successor principally indebted, it is believed, for the final success of the measure. That the report had attracted, to a considerable extent, the public attention, is sufficiently evinced by the fact, that at successive sessions of Congress, it had twice been printed by order of the House, and also by the Senate. The principles it assumed and the reasoning it urged, eventually won their way to the favor of Congress. The plan it proposed was ultimately adopted, and thus was constructed through the great Black Swamp, one of the finest roads in the Union.

At this point we are reminded of the somewhat singular and romantic fact that one of the first, if not the first lady who ever crossed the Black Swamp was Mr. Woodbridge's mother. This was on the occasion of her making the trip on horseback from Marietta to Detroit to visit her son. Of course she had the best escort that could be afforded under the circumstances, but it was her fortune to spend more than one night in the Black Swamp with no better couch than a fallen tree.

With this illustration of her rare courage and determination (which her son inherited) we may with propriety associate another incident of her life. On one occasion, while enjoying the quiet of home at Marietta, she was informed that her son Dudley had gone to Blannerhasset's Island, in the Ohio river, to fight a duel, with some young blood equally wild as himself. Her husband was absent at the time, but she had a horror of duelling and determined that something must be done to prevent the conflict. Calling upon two of her stalwart neighbors to man a canoe, she seated herself in it, and directed them to paddle as if for life, for the famous Island;—they did so, arrived in time, and Master Dudley, instead of making himself a target for a fatal bullet, was compelled to embark in the canoe, and return to his home a wiser and perhaps a better boy.

In the "History of Michigan," by James H. Lanman, the earlier services of Mr. Woodbridge, at Washington, are recognized and specified in the following terms:— "As early as the 12th of May, 1820, a report was made to Congress in reference to the construction of a road across the Black Swamp; and extraordinary efforts were also made to secure the aid of the General Government in advancing these works of internal improvement. These calls were liberally responded to on the part of the General Government. An appropriation was made for opening a road between Detroit and the Miami, and it was expended on that work with great advantage. Bills also passed Congress (through the influence of Mr. Woodbridge) providing for the construction of a road from Detroit to Chicago, and also a road from Detroit to Fort Gratiot, as well as the improvement of La Plaisance Bay."

CHAPTER III.

During the same session of Congress heretofore alluded to, of 1819–20, another question was started of very deep interest to the Territory, and which, some sixteen years afterwards, after involving the whole region of the North West in the most dangerous excitement, was settled by the strong hand of power most disastrously for Michigan. The Surveyor-General of the United States had been ordered to survey and run the boundary line which separated Ohio from Michigan. This line had been established by the Act of Congress which first erected Michigan into a separate government; and in the terms of the "articles of compact" contained in the Ordinance of 1787, it declared the boundary to be "a line to be run *due east* from the *south extreme* of Lake Michigan." The same line had been prescribed as the northern boundary of Ohio, in the act which authorized its people to form a State Government. Though not astronomically located and marked, it had always, down to 1820, been fully recognized by the people and the public authorities, both of Ohio and Michigan, as the true line. But transcending the powers granted to them by the act of Congress, as well as in opposition to the explicit terms of the compact recited in the Ordinance of 1787, the members of the Ohio convention had de-

clared that in a certain event, the northern boundary of their State should be—not the line prescribed by Congress—but a line to be run from the northern cape of Miami Bay, obliquely, to the southern bend of Lake Michigan. It was assumed also, that, as Congress, in admitting Ohio into the Union, had not expressly rejected that part of the State constitution, it should be considered, impliedly at least, as having sanctioned it. Towards the close of the session, the Commissioner of the General Land Office, sent a report to the House, from the Surveyor-General, of what *purported* to be the minutes of a survey of the line in question, accompanied by an elaborate map. The report attracted little or no attention, and there was no indication of early action upon the subject. But, as in the annunciation of it Michigan was named, Mr. Woodbridge felt it his duty to examine the report. He saw at once that it might have an important bearing upon the future interests of the Territory. It purported to recognize a latent claim on the part of Ohio, which, if sustained, would take from Michigan a strip of country from eight to twelve miles broad, along the whole base of the peninsula, and with it the *only* natural harbor she had upon Lake Erie. Mr. Woodbridge's recollections of the early history of the North West were, in this exigency, of essential use to him, by guiding him in his researches for documentary proofs. He lost no time in making those researches. When they were matured, and he became satisfied as to the *right*, he brought the matter, so far as related to Ohio, directly before the House by resolutions. These, with the whole subject, were referred to the committee on Public Lands. That committee, as then

organized, comprised among its members men eminently conspicuous for their capacity and high moral character. Its chairman, Richard C. Anderson, Jr., of Kentucky, had perhaps few superiors in the House. To much general intelligence and great clearness of perception, he united a rapidity and vigor of thought which commanded universal respect. Quick to see the important bearing of the questions involved, he deemed it proper to call for an exposition of the respective claims of the State and Territory, and invited a formal argument on each side before the committee. The course pursued by the Ohio delegation, on the occasion, was liberal and fair. They committed the argument and management of it, on their side, to one of their number—Thomas R. Ross —a gentleman of fine talents and a good debater. The other side was managed by Mr. Woodbridge. They attended at several of the sittings of the committee, and the latter was required to open the argument, which he did very fully. After some delay, Mr. Ross replied at great length; and, after mature deliberation, the committee reported in favor of Michigan. Indiana and Illinois were both indirectly interested in this question, and although there were gentlemen on the committee from those States, the report was agreed to unanimously. But, unhappily for Michigan, a few days after it was sent in the House adjourned, and there was no action during that session. The subsequent history of this question of title is soon told. At the opening of the succeeding session its prospects were promising and its friends were most sanguine; but Mr. Woodbridge had resigned his seat as a Delegate, and no final action seems to have been had on the measure. Thus the vantage ground was lost to Michigan; and time was

given to mature, array, and bring into effective action against her pretensions, all the formidable influences which Ohio knew so well how to use. The views Mr. Woodbridge had exhibited before the committee, he had occasion, acting in a different official capacity, that of Secretary of the Territory, to present, in certain letters which he addressed to Governor Ethan Allen Brown, of Ohio, in which he remonstrated in behalf of Michigan against the action of Ohio, and asked for the protection of the General Government for the Territory of Michigan. These letters, which were placed on file in the Department of State, were repeatedly published; and how far the reasoning they urged has been fairly met and refuted, if at all, the interested reader of this part of our history may hereafter, perhaps, have occasion to judge. Subsequently, a new aspect was sought to be given to the Ohio claim. Some sixteen years after, when it became necessary that Congress should act finally upon it, it was affirmed that some very ancient map of the North West, had represented the "South Bend" or southerly extreme of Lake Michigan, to be several miles north of its true position; and it was conjectured that the Continental Congress, which settled the terms of the compact recited in the Ordinance of 1787, relative to the proposed line, must have had that ancient map before them as their guide, and that consequently they could not really have intended to include within the limits of Michigan, the Miami Bay, and the strip of country in dispute. But all this was conjecture, and it was also an after-thought. The title of Michigan was contemptuously rejected—that of Ohio was confirmed; and, in the view of the antiquary and the moralist, the fact may serve to illustrate, by another signal example,

that Power is never at a loss for pretenses while ministering to its own aggrandisement.

But there were other topics which engrossed the attention of Mr. Woodbridge during his services as Delegate. Some of them related to the immediate wants of his constituents and the country generally. Among them was one touching the legislative code of the Territory, and thought deserving of the paternal regard of the General Government. That code, (if it could be so called,) was entirely without method; in general, was not in print; and its publication consisted for the greater part, in the occasional transmission of copies in manuscript, to the Judges of the Courts and other officers of the Territory, and to any others as in the exigency might demand them—for the local Government was without the funds necessary for their promulgation in print. Mr. Woodbridge called the attention of Congress to the subject, and that body was pleased to appropriate a sum of money sufficient for compiling, digesting and printing a sufficient number of copies, to supply fully the wants of the Territory for the time being. It was also during his term in Congress, that the project of fitting out an expedition for exploring the Indian country around the borders of Lake Superior and along the valley of the Upper Mississippi, was matured and determined upon. Though the direct agency of Congress in this matter was not deemed necessary, yet the objects to be attained by it, were presented to the Executive branch of the Government as of great magnitude, interesting to science, and very material as regarded the defences of the North West. The Indians of those regions were numerous, formidable, and of a very ferocious character. The events of the late war had planted deeply

in their minds a spirit of vengeful and bitter hostility against the people of the United States. Until that spirit should be softened and subdued by direct intercourse with them, and by some display of force in their country, the peace of that frontier, it was believed, could not be preserved. The country itself too, teemed with matters of great interest. Pere Marquette, La Hontan, and other French tourists and Romish missionaries, had passed along the waters of the Great Lake, a century and a half before. In vivid colors they had described the mineral riches of the countries which they saw. But their discoveries had passed away and were well-nigh forgotten. But the people of the United States, who now possessed the region, knew nothing of that hidden wealth. It was time—and it concerned the pecuniary interest of the nation, as well as the demands of science, that some preliminary measures should be taken to bring to the public view its real character. Before Mr. Woodbridge left the Territory for Washington, Governor Cass had prepared a memorial which he desired Mr. Woodbridge to present to the Secretary of War. In that memorial, he urged in strong terms the expediency of the exploration he had projected, and earnestly invited Mr. Woodbridge to press the subject on the consideration of the Government. In a letter that the Governor addressed to the Secretary, dated November 18th, 1819, setting forth his plan for exploring the Upper Mississippi and Lake Superior region, he thus alludes to Mr. Woodbridge:—

"Mr. Woodbridge, the Delegate from this Territory, at my request, takes charge of this letter; and he is so intimately acquainted with the subject, and every way so competent to enter into any explanations you may

require, that I shall not be compelled to go as much into detail as, under other circumstances, might be necessary."

Mr. Woodbridge duly explained all that seemed ambiguous or of doubtful fitness, and strongly urged the adoption of the plan. He had frequent conferences with the head of the War Department—John C. Calhoun. Though cautious, and at first reluctant to incur so great expense, he at length gave his sanction to the proposed exploration; and Mr. Woodbridge had the satisfaction of announcing to the Governor its adoption by the Government. The history of the tour has long been before the public, in the learned and interesting publications of the late Henry R. Schoolcraft.

Long before the close of his winter in Washington, Mr. Woodbridge had learned that sickness prevailed in his family, and he became convinced that he ought not again, under like circumstances, to be so long separated from his home. It occurred to him also, that perhaps his constituents might prefer to have him at home during the succeeding winter, to do what he could to help along the local Government of the Territory, and he therefore resolved to resign his seat as a Delegate when Congress should have adjourned. A new election was called, and Solomon Sibley, (afterwards distinguished as one of the Judges of the Territory,) became his successor. And thus, with the first session of the Fifteenth Congress, commenced and closed, for many years, Mr. Woodbridge's labors in the legislative councils of the nation.

CHAPTER IV.

After Mr. Woodbridge's return to Detroit, in 1820, he continued in the position of Secretary of the Territory of Michigan, holding the office altogether for eight years, oftentimes, in the interim, performing the duties of Governor. It was during that period that he wrote his letters to Governor Brown; and, according to a rule of the time, performed the duties of Collector of Customs for the town of Detroit. Among the men of the time, with whom he became intimate while sojourning in Washington, was James Lanman, a Senator in Congress from Connecticut, and like himself a native of the beautiful town of Norwich. After their separation, an interesting correspondence sprung up between them, which continued for many years; and on account of the then out-of-the-way region in which he lived, the letters of Mr. Woodbridge were full of information. A few of them may be here inserted with propriety, and the writer of this memoir hopes he will be excused for premising that the "friend" alluded to in the first sentence of the first letter was Charles James Lanman, who, like Mr. Woodbridge, was a native of Norwich, and the father of the writer, and who, after graduating at Yale College had settled, in 1817, in the practice of law, on the River Raisin, where the depon-

ant was himself born. The first letter in question gives us a good idea of the condition of Michigan as it existed forty-four years ago; and the passage where Mr. Woodbridge relinquishes his own claims for a Judgeship in favor of his father-in-law, exhibits to us the unselfishness of his character:—

DETROIT, *December* 12, 1822.

MY DEAR SIR:—My warm-hearted friend, your son, has shown me your letter to him of the 25th of September, in which you make kind mention of me. You allude in it to a sentiment, which seems to have been the subject of some paragraphs in a prior letter from him to you—"that I was tired of my official situation here." In my free conversations with him (for between him and me, I believe, there is no reserve whatever) I have doubtless given him ample occasion to deduce that inference, although abstractedly, it might seem not to have been duly considered. Nor can I charge Mr. Lanman with any indiscretion in any communication he may have made to you;—yet it was not anticipated that, especially in terms so decided, he should have communicated the sentiment. But since such has been the fact, and such especially the obliging manner in which you have been pleased to receive it, I hope you will pardon that manifest egotism the explanation of it may lead to. I wish to rescue myself from the reproach of frivolous instability, as well also as from that of the puerile belief that any situation in life can be exempt from the corrosions of care, vexation, and disappointment.

The truth is, I never realized anything of the glowing prospects which were holden out to me, and which

induced my acceptance of a situation here; a situation I not only did not court but which was indeed conferred upon me without any previous intimation. In accepting it, I sacrificed solid good for benefits never attained. The pecuniary sacrifices incurred in removing from an honorable and profitable business into a country still weltering in blood, and organizing under the most horrible devastations of war—poor, impoverished, and miserable—were to me great and ruinous. It was in the last year of the war I came here. My average expenses for the first three years of my residence, were twice greater than my salary at least. In that season, the most unprofitable for making investments in real estate, I was obliged to buy land, in order to bring myself within the qualifications required by the Ordinance of 1787. Still, I hoped for better times, and that when the country should at length have been restored to its previous condition of prosperity, I should commence the realization of the fair hopes which seduced me here; but realization still flies me. I yet owe a considerable of the purchase money for my land, and have not a house of my own in which I can live.

As regards the present moral condition of the society here, I find no congeniality, nothing to give zest to social intercourse out of my own family,—except in my intercourse with your son, and one or two others. * * * Our chief Judge is a wild theorist, fitted principally for the "extraction of sunbeams from cucumbers." * * * Judge G. is a man of respectable literary acquirements, of good taste, and good manners, but with a mind lamentably inert. * * * Judge W. has a family and is settled among us; he is undoubtedly an honest man. He possesses strong native powers of

mind, altogether self-taught. On the heel of the Revolution, among the rough mountains of Vermont, he acquired his habits and prejudices, among the most prominent of which is his deadly hostility to that common law which he is officially called upon to administer, —because it is of English descent. Such are the official representatives of national sovreignty among us. Such are the men with whom in various capacities I am obliged to act. During about eight years that I have been Secretary of this Territory, however, I have steadily avoided everything like collision with the Governor. During about two years of that period, I have officiated, in his absence, as by law of Congress I am required, as Governor and Superintendent of Indian Affairs; and while so officiating I have made it a matter of principle to pursue, so far as I could, his policy—to give effect to his views, both in Executive and Legislative concerns—jostling nothing out of place. Nor have I officially come in collision with any other of the public servants, holding it to be matter of duty, either to quit my place as Secretary, or to preserve, so far as I could, the harmonies of the singular machinery of this Colonial Government. But in succeeding so far, it has not been without some sacrifices of moral independence, which have cost me something of feeling. Such are the outlines of my pecuniary, social, and official life, during my continuance here, and such the characters of my coadjutors and lords paramount. This life has been chequered with incidents and sacrifices of various kinds, but conscientious. Though it has subjected me to unjust cabals and unwarranted aspersions, I believe it has not been censured by the good nor fruitless of public usefulness.

A change in our social and political condition is now rapidly maturing. The struggling and convulsive movements of the moral elements, newly planted among us, already give indications of a new political era here. It is the part of prudential foresight to look to its consummation.

When your son shall have been appointed Register or Receiver of a new Land office here, my office of Collector will have ceased to possess for me much interest. To me individually its pecuniary product has been very far inferior to the vexations and perplexities incident to it;—its prospective value is all it has to recommend it. The office of Secretary of this Territory will soon cease to exist. I am literally tired of it. Moral dependence, malevolent aspersions, and to a certain extent humiliation, have always been its incidents. Yet would I not wish to quit them suddenly, without some alternative that would save me from the necessity of sacrificing all my property here, and quitting the country much older and much poorer than when I came into it.

In relation to the establishment of new Land districts here, I wrote pretty fully last week to Mr. Cook of Illinois (Daniel P.) who last year had in a friendly manner proffered his services in the effectuating of an object so important to us. I have also written to Governor Brown (Ethan A.) now of the Senate and lately one of the Supreme Judges of Ohio. I think there can be no doubt (unless the General Government would discard altogether the policy hitherto pursued in relation to the establishment of Land offices) but that at least one new Land district will be created, during the present session, within the Territory. We have you know but one in it; and certain it is, I think, that, comprehending the

whole of the peninsula of Michigan—no part of the western country of equal extent can be pointed out which possesses in near the same degree so various beauties and so extraordinary excellence. Neither is there any in regard to which there can exist so strong motives of policy for throwing into it, by affording every practicable facility, a dense population. Relatively to the opposite country of Canada and its topography, this Territory is peculiarly exposed, should a state of war unhappily occur. Rather, indeed, than that it should have such a population, I would consider it wise to give to the actual settlers one half of the public domain. Fortunately, however, there does not exist a present necessity for such a measure. To extend to us those facilities which the General Government has been accustomed to extend to other parts of the western country, is perhaps all that the exigency requires; especially if to these be superadded the making of that public road through the Black Swamp, for the making of which I have long thought the faith of the Government has been pledged; and this I endeavored to show in the printed report you may perhaps have noticed on the Brownstown treaty.

I have reason to believe, from various circumstances, that Mr. Sibley (Solomon), though no doubt in favor of the creation here of a new Land district, would prefer that the office should be located in the Saguina country. The motives for such preference must be left to be guessed at. Doubtless the good of the Territory would be advanced greatly by the location there of such an office. With all proper deference, I think it far better located at Frenchtown, to be thence removed up the

river Raisin, when such removal may be safe. As yet, the Saguina country is a wild wilderness, and what little of personal safety there may now be there, is to be attributed to be establishment of an armed force recently, and I believe in consequence of my official representation, to Mr. Calhoun, of the temper of the Indians who inhabit the country. Last season, there was no safety either for property or persons from their depredations, even the public surveyors were stopped by their hostile threats and violence. But doubtless, so long as the United States Garrison is kept there, the incumbents of a Land office would live securely. But I would deem it more wise and more creditable to the nation that it should first or at least simultaneously attempt to consolidate its population. That it should first give encouragement for the settlement of the country on the borders of Ohio—up the river Raisin, (whose general course is parallel with the north boundary of that State,) where a country as interesting I believe may be found as any west of the Alleghany mountains. And why is it not prudent to consolidate this population, as it advances? Why should we continue to be indefinitely cut off from the ample resources and great strength of the Ohio? Our true policy, I think, is to build a national road over the Black Swamp, and without delay to encourage by every possible means, the settlement of the whole country from the Ohio line, or at least the eastern section of it upon the Miami to the Saguina Bay—the lakes Huron, St. Clair and Erie, and the straits of Detroit and Sinclair inclusive. To which end there should be two new Land districts—one southerly, at the river Raisin, and the other northwesterly, at some central point in

the Saguina country. With a view to a more satisfactory exposition of such a plan, I intended to have prepared for transmission to you a rough sketch of the country, but for want of time I must defer it. With regard to the reputed plan of Governor Vance of Ohio, to establish a Land office at the rapids of the Miami, and extend its district on both sides of the State boundary line, I cannot but believe it chimerical. Why disregard so important a political boundary as a State line —the boundary too of a Judicial district and circuit of the United States—for such an object?

In adverting to the topic of the creation of a District Court of the United States here, as affording a situation which would have many charms for me, it did not occur to me to state that Mrs. Woodbridge has possessed a lively hope that her father, Judge Trumbull, would remove here and take up his residence with us. Him, my dear sir, you know well—how powerful and how splendid his mental faculties once were, and how much he would have added to the dignity and the learning of any judicial tribunal. You too know better than I can, whether by age those faculties be in any degree impaired. If they be not, and he should consent to it, and you and the Connecticut delegation should, from motives of personal esteem, or State pretensions, think it in anywise expedient to locate him among us, in the judicial character I alluded to, then it would be useless for me to add, whatever might otherwise be my chance of success, I withdraw my own claims.

Pardon me after all, my dear sir, for my wild speculations. It is an evil we are so prone to!

I heard to-day of the good health of your son, whom

I expect, in a few days to see, and remain, dear sir, with perfect esteem and respect.

Your obedient servant,

WM. WOODBRIDGE.

HON. JAMES LANMAN,
Washington City.

The next letter that has been selected for quotation in this place, like the preceding one, will be found to throw light both upon the personal history of Mr. Woodbridge and the early history of affairs in the North West.

DETROIT, *January* 23*d*, 1823.

DEAR SIR:—The tenor of our last Washington advices, lead to the belief that the elements of this local Government will at length be reviewed and by the present Congress.

There are two or three points (interesting principally as they regard me) to which I must beg permission to ask your attention in this contingency. And this the more particularly because, being, in the general system, of minor importance, they might otherwise escape observation. They regard exclusively the relation which the Secretary of the Territory bears to the general apportionment of powers and duties among the administrators of the Colonial Government. That relation is anomalous, and from the first organization of the Government of the North West Territory in 1787 to the present time, his duties, powers, and official standing have never been clearly defined. The office bears some analogy to that of Secretary of State of a State, in this, that it is made by the Ordinance of 1787 the depository of the

Legislative and Executive acts and of the archives of the Government. But it bears a closer analogy to that of Lieutenant Governor, inasmuch as the incumbent of the local authorities, in respect to the tenure of his appointment, being accountable only to, and required to report only to the paramount Government: and particularly also, that, by the act of 1789, passed in order to accommodate the Government of the Territories to the new constitution—all the powers and duties of Governor and of Superintendent of Indian Affairs are, in the absence, death, or removal of the Governor, conferred upon the Secretary. No researches into the United States' laws will lead, I believe, to a more detailed account of the powers and duties of the Secretary than will be found in the ordinance and the act of 1789. An act of Congress of 1792, now obsolete, relative to the old North and South West Territories, did, among other things, purport to subject the secretary to the control of the local Legislature; but it is presumed that the provision must have been inoperative so long as such Territory continued in *the first grade of Government.* The Governor and Judges, of right cannot *originate* and *make* laws, they can only adopt; and if the secretary of a Territory be not Secretary of State of a Territory—where can a law be found imposing duties upon him to adopt? The act in question, however, was never brought down or applied to this Territory. With the single exception of Illinois perhaps, while Mr. Edwards, now of the Senate, was Governor, and Mr. Pope secretary, I believe the Secretaries of the Territories have uniformly affirmed and sustained their official freedom from control by the other local authorities. The history of this Territory, (always the victim of incessant cabals,) furnishes abundant evidence, in the time of

my predecessors, of attempts made by the local authorities to add oppressive burthens to the office of Secretary; and to degrade him to the footing of a subordinate clerk and private secretary, but these have always been heretofore resisted. Indeed, why may they not as well reduce his salary as increase his burthens?

As I have before had the honor to state to you I have never had any practical difference with the United States officers of this Territory; but I have had occasion, as matter of principle, in a letter I once addressed to the Governor and Judges to protest against an act of theirs purporting to add to my duties. Now, if it be really intended to degrade the office, and to authorize the Governor and Judges *ad libitum*, to impose whatever burthens upon the incumbent they may choose, I could desire that such power were given in terms less vague. But I object utterly against the policy of giving color to such pretense; and I will here observe that, considering the expensiveness of living here, and the character of the officer and his onerous duties, the salary, to be just and proportionate, should be increased.

There is one other subject to which I beg leave to advert. The fixed salary of the Governor is $2.000 per annum. He has been allowed by the War Department a clerk called "Secretary of the Indian Department," with a salary of $900, and I believe rations. In addition he has been allowed as Superintendent of Indian Affairs, an extra sum in money and rations—in consequence of the very troublesome nature of this duty—to the amount of about $2.000—making an aggregate of $4.000 per annum; besides occasional allowances as Commissioner in Indian treaty-making; and his pay as Brigadier General of the United States,

which commission, I believe, he held about one year. The result of the whole matter has been that, from a state of comparative indigence, that gentleman has arisen to a princely estate. Against all this I urge no manner of objection; nor would I, on any account, be the occasion of any objection stated. If Governor Cass has been well and liberally paid, so, beyond all doubt, he has performed valuable and important service. But it has happened that during this period, though I believe I have been sufficiently devoted to my official duties, I have been growing poor; that while, for the whole time during which I have performed the duties of Superintendent for the Governor, he has been receiving these extra allowances and pecuniary benefits. It is to be observed, furthermore, that while I have performed those duties, they have been rendered more arduous, because when the Governor has absented himself he has always taken his bookkeeper with him—the Secretary of the Indian Department. When, for the first period in my life, I was in Washington, (in the winter of 1818–19,) I was out of funds, and producing evidence from the State Department, of my officiating as Superintendent of Indian Affairs, I applied to Mr. Calhoun for an allowance—not for the money awarded to the Superintendent, but simply for a commutation of a ration account. I found him very unwilling to act upon it, until he should first have seen what Governor Cass had charged for the same period. I urged the proposition on the ground that the allowance should be made because it was called for the nature of the services rendered, and from principles of justice, and that it should be made to the *office* and not to the *man*. I had determined never, so long as I continue an officer of

the Government, to be brought in contact, on a pecuniary difference with its head, and I therefore ceased to press my claim. Since that period, Governor Cass has received credit for the whole amount of his own claims. Now, with respect to the past, I wish it to rest. But relative to future arrangements—should this subject be discussed, I would respectfully urge the expediency of legislative arrangement.

I regret, dear sir, the necessity of going so much into detail, and I ask your forgiveness.

With very great respect and sincere esteem,

I remain truly yours,

WM. WOODBRIDGE.

HON. JAMES LANMAN,
Washington City.

Mr. Woodbridge and the late lamented Governor Cass were boys together on the banks of the Ohio; they both entered the wilds of Michigan at about the same period; and having established their residences almost within a stone's throw of each other on the beautiful Detroit river, they were, for a period of forty-five years, the two leading men of Michigan. They were always good friends, but never perhaps very intimate. This want of congeniality arose from the circumstance, that the characters and tastes of the two men were totally unlike. Governor Cass enjoyed robust health, and was an energetic politician and man of the world; Mr. Woodbridge, on the other hand, possessed a somewhat frail constitution, was a great lover of the quiet of home, and never so happy as when busy among his books. They were also almost invariably opposed to each other in politics. As the former has placed his name high on

the roll of fame, the subjoined opinions of his character, as expressed by his early friend, may not be without interest. The letter in which the opinions occur is as follows:—

DETROIT, *March* 13, 1823.

MY DEAR SIR:—I am not certain that I have acknowledged the receipt of your interesting letter of January 21. If I should be found trespassing upon your patience, by reiterating sentiments already expressed, I must ask your excuse for such want of consideration.

I believe I am not peculiarly predisposed to that ugly disorder Dr. Rush calls *tristmania;* but we are all in a great degree creatures of circumstances; and often—*nolens volens*—discover in our path this enemy to human comfort. It was at such a crisis that I received that kind testimonial from you, the receipt of which I am now acknowledging; its effect I may thank you for, but need not comment upon. It can be said of but few men, I believe, that praise from honorable minds is not grateful to them. I indulge the hope too, that in this world of gloom and disappointment there are perhaps as few whose hearts are not (at least for the time being) expanded into contentment and philanthropy, by the elastic influences of beneficence and friendship.

I would not conceal from you, my dear sir, that when I saw your letter to your son I felt some uneasiness lest an erroneous impression should have found place in your mind concerning my views and circumstances. It has afforded me much satisfaction to learn that my egotism has been pardoned.

It has not surprised me, that Governor Cass should have expressed himself to you concerning me in a man-

ner to induce the belief that he participated largely in my views, confidence, and hopes. It is a debt he has long owed me to express himself of me in friendly terms; and I cannot doubt but that abstractedly he would cheerfully give me every aid in the promotion of my just hopes. Of human character I am far less capable of judging at a glance than many others;—suddenly I may not ever seize its leading traits; but I do claim, as regards his character, some distinctive knowledge of it. My acquaintance with him commenced soon after he left Exeter Academy. He was then about seventeen years old, and before he was eighteen he had commenced the study of law with my uncle, Matthew Backus, then of my father's family. In the profession he was in advance of me two or three years, he having been admitted I think in the latter part of 1803, soon after I had seriously commenced the same study. During his continuance at Marietta, he was almost as familiar in my father's house as I was; and from that time, though we have not advanced exactly on parallel lines, we were always acquainted, always on good terms. Though we have long ceased to be very intimate, we have never quarrelled. In direct violation of Lavater's rules, Governor Cass certainly unites a superior judgment with a most uncommonly retentive memory. He has an understanding, powerful, quick, and comprehensive. His acquired knowledge is most widely diffuse but is rather *ample* than *profound*. He is ignorant on no subject—he is deeply penetrating perhaps on none. He has a rich imagination, a wonderful flow of animal spirits, and they are wholly subservient to his will. He possesses much fertility of romance, and extraordinary colloquial talents. But every exertion of these has its distinctive object.

This world to him, is but a play-house; and that drama with him is best, which is best performed, and most surely conduces to its occult object. He has originated and kept in operation here a system of political machinery, which few perhaps would have devised or could have maintained. A more consummate politician will rarely be found. Touching his predispositions concerning me, I might calculate, I think, upon his good offices. But *amicitiæ potentum, non frigiendæ!*" I have been weighing this sentiment of Horace these ten or fifteen years. And what after all is that friendship worth which is based only upon political convenience—which is mere matter of calculation? I will not despise it: but I cannot covet it, least of all from an old comrade. You have expressed the sentiment that you "could hardly desire for me a better friend." I have felt it due to myself to pursue this topic with somewhat of pertinacity, until I have doubtless fatigued your patience. I have submitted to you, with all confidence and candor, the grounds of my own conflicting sentiments, and I now quit the discussion without reluctance. I am not sorry either that I must give such direction to this letter as that it will not meet your eye until after the active, busy, fluttering scenes of the winter shall have given place to the calm, the quietude, and the blandishments of home. I yet claim the privilege to superadd that, with the most cordial respect and esteem,

I remain, dear sir, yours,

WM. WOODBRIDGE.

Hon. JAMES LANMAN,
Senator in Congress,
(now at Norwich, Connecticut.)

CHAPTER V.

About the time that the foregoing letters were written Mr. Woodbridge was appointed one of a Board of Commissioners for adjusting the private Land claims in the Territory of Michigan. The duties of that position he discharged with rare fidelity;—and as he was already much occupied with the duties of Secretary of the Territory and of Collector of the Customs, it would seem that he could not have had much time for other employment. But the truth was, he continued in the practice of his profession; was a constant attendant at the bar, and was engaged in some cases which required as thorough research as those which come before the courts at the present day.

Although he loved his profession, for which he was admirably fitted, he was compelled to consider it subordinate. His law library even at that time, was truly splendid and, as an old friend has remarked, he "valued it as the apple of his eye." About that period he was engaged as counsel for Lord Selkirk in a question with the Hudson's Bay Company, as to the settlement upon the Red River of the North, and was also the legal adviser of the North West Fur Company, projected and conducted by the late John Jacob Astor.

In 1825, he was called upon, as one of the Board of

Commissioners, to decide a contest between Messrs. Wing, Biddle and Richard, as to which of the three was elected Delegate to Congress. The Territorial law, under which the Commissioners acted, was peculiar. It required the Board—upon a full view of the whole matter—to determine *who* was *duly* and legally elected; it imposed upon them, as they thought, the duty to look into and judge of the legality of the proceedings, in each elective district. They did so; and their decision occasioned great bitterness of feeling. It was also continued in the House of Representatives. A majority of the House committee on Elections, not distinguishing between a "Delegate" and a member under the Constitution, were of opinion that the Board had no authority to look beyond what purported to be the *returns;* nor, to judge of the legality of the proceedings, notwithstanding the particular phraseology of the law; and yet the same committee decided that the result arrived at by the Board of Commissioners was the correct one. In the House there was great diversity of opinion as to their right to judge, but the final report of the committee was sustained and Mr. Wing held his seat. On this complicated question Mr. Woodbridge had prepared an elaborate opinion, which was printed in pamphlet form, and according to its tenor was the whole subject settled by the House of Representatives.

In the beginning of 1828, the Hon. James Witherell, for many years the presiding Judge of the Supreme Court of the Territory, resigned that responsible office, and Mr. Woodbridge was appointed as his successor by President John Quincy Adams. This honor was conferred upon him at the solicitation of the Governor, the Judges and the Delegate of the Territory, sustained by

a formal request from the Bar and the body of Grand Jurors in Detroit, all of whom knew him intimately and appreciated his merits. To him, personally, the appointment was not a desirable one; but he was induced to accept it, to use his own words, principally because it might enable him, with less sacrifice, to remove with his family, where they all desired to go, on a farm which he had procured several years before, a short distance from Detroit down the river, in the township of Spring Wells. This tract had a beautiful front upon the river, and extended back several miles; and he had added greatly to its convenience and value by the buildings and fences he had caused to be constructed upon it, and by the gardens, fruit-yards, and extensive orchards he had planted. It was not without much reluctance however, that he consented to accept the Judgeship. The salary he knew was inadequate; and in itself did not afford him a support during the whole period that he held the office. Considering the manner in which it was conferred upon him, he felt that he could not with propriety decline the proffer, and he immediately entered upon his new duties in February, 1828. He was made the presiding Judge of the court, and his associates on the Bench were Henry Chipman and Solomon Sibley, both of whom were men with whom it was a source of gratification to be associated; and it has been said that the Bar of Michigan, at that particular period, was not surpassed in ability by that of any State in the Union.

It was while he continued on the Bench that a case occurred, which, for the time being, was the subject of considerable notoriety; not so much from its inherent importance, as from the efforts that were made to *sub-*

limate it into a most alarming attack upon the "freedom of the Press." A prosecution for contempt was commenced against the editor of a newspaper for publishing an article calculated to produce a prejudice in the public mind relative to a cause then pending, and to be tried by Jury—thus tending to defeat the ends of justice. Not feeling disposed to *purge* his contempt, the court pronounced judgment against him. In addition to the evil temper which seemed to impel him in publishing the offensive article, his great ambition appeared to be to gain the honor of martyrdom. Like other ephemera, this trial had its day and passed into forgetfulness. Mr. Woodbridge continued on the Bench for four years, and during that period was constantly employed either as presiding Judge of the Supreme Court or on the Circuit. There were no good roads in the Territory then, travelling was consequently always fatiguing, often dangerous; his duties were exceedingly laborious; and a consciousness of discharging them faithfully constituted his most vital requital. In February, 1832, the term of his appointment by Act of Congress expired. General Jackson was then President, and appointed a successor to his office. His removal was, it is believed, one of the first fruits of the "spoils' system," which had, a short time before, been engrafted into the policy of the new Administration. This act, on the part of President Jackson, created deep feeling in Michigan, in which the Bar universally participated.

The circumstances attending the transition of Michigan from a *Colonial* to a *State* Government led to all such disorders and absurdities as might well be imagined. In that crisis, he was not permitted to be a mere "looker on." He was elected a member of the convention,

held in 1835, to form a State constitution. He was the only *Whig* elected in the district in which he resided, and one of only four in the convention. In that position he felt himself obliged to take ground against the extention to aliens of the right of suffrage. In this course he was only partially successful. He also opposed the measure of *forcing* the State Government into operation without waiting for the consent of Congress.

On the twenty-sixth of January, 1837, Michigan was admitted into the Union as a State, and among those who were elected to the State Senate was Mr. Woodbridge. He took an active part in the proceedings; but it does not appear that during his service in that capacity, there were any measures of great importance brought up for consideration.

In 1839, Mr. Woodbridge was elected Governor of the State of Michigan and entered upon his duties as such in January, 1840. He acted with promptitude, and while he felt that important obligations had been imposed upon him, he took occasion, in his Inaugural Message delivered on the seventh of January, to recognize in a manly and high Christian-like manner his need of guidance by the Providence of God. While appealing to the members of the Legislature for their hearty co-operation, he gave expression, among others, to the subjoined just and noble sentiment: "Let us suppress all such local partialities and party animosities as may seem unfriendly to the common good, and each in our prescribed sphere, and invoking the blessings of Providence upon our labors, with singleness of heart, seek to advance the moral and political prosperity of our common country." By principles like these was he always guided in the discharge of all his public as well as

private duties, and hence the salutary influence which he exerted upon all those associated with him in public affairs.

By way of illustrating his industry and promptitude, it may be stated that on the very next day after taking the oath as Governor he submitted to the Legislature an elaborate message on the affairs of Michigan. In that State Paper, he reiterated the wrongs which had been committed against the State by Congress in regard to her admission into the Union, and in doing so, only echoed the strong feelings which pervaded the entire population. The financial condition of the State at that time was at a low ebb, and this fact he improved, by elucidating the importance of strict economy. He took strong ground against a project that was uppermost in mens' minds, which was, to construct, simultaneously, at the expense of the State alone, five different and parallel lines of inland communication by railroads and canals; he thought the scheme splendid and captivating in its design, but disproportioned to the wants of the people, and altogether beyond their means to accomplish. He thought that such enterprises should be left to be carried out by private enterprize or the General Government. The unfortunate condition of the currency question, as it then existed, also commanded his attention, and he recommended a thorough examination of all the banks that had caused the trouble, in part, by suspending specie payments.

In March, 1840, Mr. Woodbridge submitted a special message to the Legislature on the distribution of the proceeds of the Public Lands. The immediate cause of this, was a series of resolutions forwarded to Congress by the State of Vermont, instructing the Delegation

from that State to "oppose any measure calculated to promote the eventual surrender of those lands to the States in which they are situated." He considered this an ominous movement against all the Western States, in view of what had already occurred, and he took strong ground against it and thought it his duty to lay a detailed history of the whole question before the people of Michigan. His views were universally applauded throughout the State, but all such arguments, when they came before Congress, were like "damming the waters of the Nile with bulrushes," for during the very next year the Atlantic States had it all their own way on this as well as on all other questions of national interest. One brief passage may be here quoted which gives us a glimpse into the heart and patriotism of Mr. Woodbridge:—"Nothing can separate the affections of the new States from the old but a deep sense of injustice; continued, persevering injustice! Michigan *has* suffered wrong; wrong has been done her on her *southern* border, and on her northern; while in all her counties her enterprise is cramped, her energies are paralyzed, and her resources are locked up in the public domain. But she is not yet driven to the wall. She loves the *Union*, and will adhere to it; she knows the intelligence of its people, and has everything to hope from its justice; she respects the firmness of Congress, and trusts that no such disposition of the Public Lands will be sanctioned by that body as may prejudice the just rights of Michigan."

CHAPTER VI.

As already intimated, Mr. Woodbridge was always a staunch Whig in politics, and it was by that party that he was chosen Governor. In 1840, according to the records of the day, the Whigs swept everything before them in the State, and held a very considerable majority in the Legislature. On this Legislature it devolved to elect a Senator in Congress. The party was much divided among candidates, and a contest was waged among the friends of each, almost as bitter as that waged the year before between the two political parties. At length, after much caucusing and excitement, the Hon. J. Wright Gordon, a young man of ability and high character, who had been Lieutenant-Governor on the ticket with Mr. Woodbridge as Governor, was nominated as the Whig candidate. The night before the joint meeting of the Legislature was to be held for the election of Senator, while Mr. Gordon was enjoying a grand supper with his friends, a combination of disaffected Whigs and the Democratic minority was made, by which it was agreed that they would support Mr. Woodbridge. The next morning the joint meeting was held, and Mr. Gordon, as Lieutenant-Governor presided; the first name called was that of a noted Democrat, and when he was heard to repeat the name of "William Woodbridge," the

Whigs were astounded, and their candidate was defeated. The whole scene was one of intense interest, and will long be remembered by the politicians of Michigan.

Mr. Woodbridge took his seat in the United States Senate, on the fourth of March, 1841, and from the start entered with activity into its proceedings. He was made chairman of the committee on the Library of Congress, and was appointed a member of the several standing committees on Agriculture, Claims, Commerce, Manufactures, and Public Lands. The reports submitted by him were numerous and invariably commanded attention; and while he made it a point to protect and advance the interests of his own State, he was not unmindful of the fact that the whole country had a right to count upon his support of measures of general importance. To command the attention of the Senate in the good days now alluded to, was something of an honor, for it will be remembered that among the men who directed the wheels of Government at that period, were such giants as Clay, Silas Wright, Woodbury, Benton, Crittenden, Rives, Mangum, Berrien, S. S. Phelps, Lewis, Benjamin, Tappan, and Daniel Webster. Among the subjects discussed by Mr. Woodbridge at considerable length, in the Senate, were those of *Land Distribution, the right of a State to instruct Senators, and the Internal Improvements of Michigan.*

It was during Mr. Woodbridge's last year but one in the Senate that Mr. Webster was returned to that body, after his service in the Cabinet of President Tyler; and it was while the Ex-Secretary of State was delivering his famous speech in *Defence of the Treaty of Washington*, that the Senator from Michigan was called out on

the carpet in a manner that was creditable to all the parties concerned. Mr. Webster had come to the discussion of the article in the treaty for the extradition of offenders, when he remarked as follows:—"As soon as that provision was agreed to, the disturbances ceased on the one side and on the other. They were heard of no more. In the formation of this clause of the treaty, I had the advantage of consultation with a venerable friend near me, (Mr. Woodbridge) one of the members from Michigan. He pressed me not to forgo the opportunity of introducing some such provision. He examined it, and I will ask him if he knows any other cause for the instantaneous suppression of these border difficulties than this treaty provision?"

Mr. Woodbridge rose, and spoke in reply, as follows:

"Mr. President, I may not disregard the allusion which the gentleman has done me the honor to make to me, in reference to the inconsiderable part which I deemed it my duty to take in the matter in question. A brief statement of some facts which occurred, and a glance simply at the condition of that border country from which I come, will be all that the occasion seems to demand.

"That part of Canada with which the people of Michigan are brought more immediately in contact, extends from the head of Lake Erie to Point Edwards, at the lower extremity of Lake Huron, a distance of about one hundred miles. Along this intermediate distance, the straits of Detroit and of St. Clair furnish every imaginable facility for the escape of fugitives. For their entire length, the shores of those straits, on either side, exhibit lines of dense and continuous settlements. Their shores are lined and their smooth surface covered

with boats and vessels of all dimensions and descriptions, from the bark canoe to the steamer of a thousand tons. If the perpetrator of crime can reach a bark canoe or a light skiff, and detach himself from the shore, he may in a few minutes defy pursuit, for he will be within a foreign jurisdiction. In *such* a state of things no society can be safe unless there be some power to reclaim fugitives from justice. While your Territorial Government existed there, and its executive administration under the control of this National Government was in the hands of my honorable colleague, (General Cass,) a conventional arrangement, informal undoubtedly in its character, was entered into by him with the authorities of Canada, sustained by local legislation on both sides, by which these evils were greatly lessened. When the present State Government took the place of the Territorial Government, this arrangement of necessity ceased; and then the evils alluded to were greatly aggravated, and became eminently dangerous. Shortly before the first session of Congress at which I attended after the inauguration of General Harrison, a very aggravated case of crime occurred, and its perpetrators as usual escaped into Canada. It was made the subject of an official communication to the State Legislature. And soon after my arrival here, I deemed it to be my duty to lay the matter before the Secretary of State, with a view to the adoption of some appropriate convention with Great Britain.

"The honorable Senator, then Secretary of State, was pleased to receive the suggestion favorably; but suggested to me the expediency of obtaining, if practicable, the sense of the Senate on the subject. Accordingly, I afterwards introduced a resolution here having that ob-

ject in view, and it was referred to the consideration of the committee on Foreign Relations, of which an honorable Senator from Virginia, (Mr. Rives,) not now a member of the Senate, was chairman.

"Mr. Rives expressed himself very decidedly in favor of the proposition. But negotiations having been begun, or being about to commence, with Lord Ashburton, it was not deemed expedient, I believe, that it should then be made matter of discussion in the Senate. I had not ceased to feel very earnest solicitude on the subject; and, as the negotiation approached its termination, Mr. Webster did me the honor to send to me the *project* of that article of the treaty which relates to the subject. He desired me to consider it and to exhibit it, confidentially perhaps, to such Senators as came from border States, for their consideration, and for such modification of its terms and scope as might be deemed expedient. This I did. The form and scope of the article met, I believe, the approbation of all to whom I showed it. Nor was any modification suggested, except, perhaps, one very immaterial one, by an honorable Senator from New York. Of all this I advised Mr. Webster, and the project became afterwards an article of the treaty, with but little if any variation. I believe I can throw no more light on the subject, sir. But the honorable Senator, having intimated to me that, in his discussion of the subject, he might perhaps have occasion to refer to the part I took in the matter, I have provided myself with the copy of the message to the Legislature of Michigan, of which I had in the beginning made use, and which, in order to show the extent of the evil referred to, and the necessity which

existed for some treaty stipulation on the subject, I ask the Secretary to read.

The extract having been read, Mr. Woodbridge then proceeded:—"I have only to add my entire and unqualified conviction that no act of the legislative or treaty-making power, that I have ever known, has been more successful in its operation than this article of the treaty; nor could any provision have been attended by more happy consequences to the peace and safety of society in that remote frontier."

The Journal of the Senate shows plainly that during Mr. Woodbridge's term of six years, he was a most attentive and industrious member. What he accomplished and what he attempted in his position as a legislator, need not to be recapitulated. His numerous reports from various committees, and his published speeches, form a part of the records of the Government, and will ever be the silent witnesses of his usefulness as a public man. The manner in which Mr. Webster complimented him has already been noticed. Mr. Calhoun spoke of one of his reports on the Public Lands as "able, ingenious and original;" and Mr. Clay, on more occasions than one, mentioned his efforts in the Senate in highly flattering terms. He retired from the Senate in 1847, and then it was that in real earnest his official life seemed to be at an end!

CHAPTER VII.

To Mr. Woodbridge, the transition from the Senate Chamber and the political atmosphere of Washington to the quiet of his home in Detroit was most gratifying. Though as deeply attached to his profession as of old, he had not the will actively to resume his labors at the Bar; but was content, as the shadows of his life were lengthening, to busy himself chiefly with his domestic duties and the pleasures of his Library and of Horticulture. So far as he was himself concerned, he did not cast a thought upon the world of politics; and the premonitions of the great contest which placed General Taylor in the Presidential chair, only fell upon his ear to make him wonder at what was coming. In the mean time, however, his friends both in the West and the East were discussing the propriety of nominating him for the office of Vice President on the ticket with General Taylor. As early as July, 1847, the Detroit Advertiser brought his name forward as its candidate for the Vice Presidency, and argued that because of his long, arduous, and faithful services to the State and the whole country, he deserved to be thus rewarded. This spontaneous nomination was echoed in the East, and by way of exhibiting the feeling that prevailed among his friends, the subjoined paragraph from the organ of

the Native American party in Philadelphia is submitted:—

"We propose (for Vice President) that old pioneer of the North Western States, William Woodbridge of Michigan, Ex-Governor and Ex-United States Senator of that State. Mr. Woodbridge was elected to the United States Senate by the united votes of Whigs and Democrats, irrespective of party.

"The people's independent ticket as proposed in Michigan, and in fact in the whole North West, is Zachary Taylor for President, and William Woodbridge for Vice President. With Woodbridge upon the ticket, the people of the North West would make a clean sweep for old Rough and Ready, Cass or no Cass. In presenting the name of William Woodbridge for the Vice Presidency, we express an opinion in favor of his talents, integrity, statesmanship and well known popularity—and expressing further the conviction that Governor Woodbridge will be apt to be nominated in the People's Rough and Ready Independent National Convention, whenever and wherever held, and shall cheerfully abide by the choice of the Convention, should it be Woodbridge or Winthrop, or any other Rough and Ready Independent people's man. Should Cass be nominated for the Presidency, Woodbridge is just the man to 'head him' in the North West."

The papers of his party, in the North West particularly, were filled with editorials, contributions, and reports of meetings in his support for the nomination, but the limits of this volume will not allow of their being more fully noticed. It is enough to say that they were enthusiastic and highly complimentary.

As all men know, Millard Fillmore was nominated,

and so the advocacy of Mr. Woodbridge ended only in a compliment.

The retired and quiet manner of life into which Mr. Woodbridge settled, after his return from Washington, was found to be one of absolute necessity on account of his health;—he had never been a man of robust physique, but constant and untiring application for many years to his private and public duties, had now assaulted his nervous system. But he continued to read and study without ceasing, for life to him was almost a burthen without a perpetual supply of food for his intellect, and he was occasionally induced to address his fellow-citizens on topics of general interest. Two of these addresses, one delivered before *The New England Society of Michigan*, on the 22d December, 1847, and the other before *The Detroit Young Men's Society*, in April, 1848, have been selected for re-publication, and will be found at the close of this volume. They display a knowledge of men and things, a refinement of feeling, and a culture of mind which reflect the highest credit upon his character as a man and a scholar.

In one of the addresses alluded to, is related an incident which, as it illustrates Mr. Woodbridge's natural love of fun and at the same time gives us an idea of the simplicity of the early French population of Michigan, is here reproduced. He was speaking to his audience on the importance of knowledge as well as virtue in carrying on a Government, and then proceeded as follows:—

"When, many years ago, the *Walk-in-the-Water* first made its appearance at our wharves, it produced, as you may well suppose, quite a sensation, especially among those who had never seen or heard of a steamboat be-

fore. The advent of so extraordinary a monster was soon bruited about. Among the multitudes who gathered from far and near to look at it, there was a native Canadian, a little above middle age. He was an amiable, an intelligent, and a highly respected citizen. But he had never heard of a steamboat before. Being advised of its arrival and wonderful performance, he had set out on the instant, fearing it would leave the city before he could see it; and travelling some thirty miles or more, principally in the night-time, he reached here about daylight. More bold than the rest, and early as it was, he ventured on board. He was politely received, remained a long time on board, and was shown everything. But he could speak no English. Verbal explanations, therefore, were of no avail.

"Very early in the same morning, and long before my ordinary time of rising, I was startled by a violent and continued knocking at my door. Dressing myself very hastily, I went to see what horrible thing had happened. It was my old and polite acquaintance, Mons. Tremble, living somewhere about the mouth of Huron, now 'Clinton' river. Scarcely allowing himself time for that courteous salutation which Frenchmen (God bless them!) *never forget;* and in a condition of undisguised agitation, he burst into an exclamation that 'the world was coming to an end.' I *thought* he spoke distinctly; I *thought* I heard him clearly; but I could not comprehend him! '*Plait il, Monsieur?*' I said to him; and he repeated his affirmation—'*Voila la fin du monde,*' he said, '*qui s'approche; et bien tot tout sera detruit!*' He was not drunk, I thought; he did not appear like a crazy man. I could not believe that *I* was either the one or the other; and feeling that it was *my* turn to be astonished,

I again asked him what he said? what he meant? A third time he repeated his assertion, but in conclusion he went on to remark, that—'Now you and I see vessels driven with violence by *fire* through the water. Soon they will be hurled through the air also by fire. You and I may probably both live to see these things; and then all things will melt with fervent heat, and the world will be burnt up! The Priests told him so—the Holy Bible says it!' The mystery was solved, he had seen the steamboat."

Appended to the address already quoted is a note touching the origin of the famous poem entitled "McFingall," which may, with propriety be reproduced in this place, as the author thereof was Mr. Woodbridge's father-in-law, and died under his roof in 1831; anything that he thought proper to communicate should be received as a fragment of interesting literary history. After mentioning the fact with others alluded to in in the address, that John Trumbull, was at one time a law student of John Adams, Mr. Woodbridge concludes as follows:—

"As illustrative of the vigilance and devotedness to the cause of those who constituted the Boston Association, it may be interesting to relate an incident relative to the origin and publication of a burlesque poem, written by Mr. Trumbull, and which, in its day, obtained no small degree of celebrity. The year 1775 had commenced under the most fearful and portentious auspices. It had already become apparent, that "unconditional submission" or war, under circumstances of the most appalling disparity, were the only alternatives. Firmness of purpose and stern resolve, had hitherto marked the proceedings of public bodies; and the din

of active preparation for the conflict resounded through the land. But the British troops had occupied Boston in great force. The leaders of the popular party there had dispersed. Several of the members of the association were attending the General Congress, at Philadelphia, as delegates. Others had found refuge elsewhere. The war had indeed actually commenced. Gloom and dismay had penetrated into domestic circles; and there was great danger, lest the country should shrink from the unequal contest. Under these circumstances, and while Mr. Trumbull, in his native State, was pursuing his professional labors as successfully as the disturbed condition of the country would permit, he received through a confidential agent, a communication from Colonel David Humphries, purporting to have been written by the direction of that same association of patriots of whom he also was a member. By this communication Mr. Trumbull was authoritatively admonished that the cause of freedom was in danger; that, appalled by the vast power and the angry tone of Great Britain, the country was sinking into despondency; that something must be attempted, and that quickly, to rouse its spirit and to excite and elevate its latent energies! The letter concluded with a peremtory order, that he should forthwith prepare something to dispel the melancholy that overspread the patriot cause; that he must write something to 'set the people laughing!'

"Following this mandatory direction, Mr. Trumbull immediately commenced his Hudibrastic Epic, 'McFingal;' and having finished the two or three of the first cantos, the manuscript was secretly sent to Philadelphia, and there anonymously published, and soon spread over the colonies. 'No invoice of goods,' (using the em-

phatic words of Judge Trumbull to the writer of this note,) 'was ever more truly *made out and sent to order*, than were the parts thus published of 'McFingal,' and being thus disposed of, he had no intention of completing the work or prosecuting it any further. The effort had subserved the purpose for which it was undertaken. Its playful humor and caustic satire, had done the work of embattled soldiers. Pale melancholy had been chased from the land, and laughter-loving mirth soon made way for the return of that confiding and cheerful courage, which never afterwards forsook the country. It was not until stimulated by another letter from Colonel Humphreys, that the author of 'McFingal' consented to resume the work, when he finished it as it now appears."

CHAPTER VIII.

From the year 1847 to 1861, the even tenor of Mr. Woodbridge's life was interrupted by three events which called forth all his Christian fortitude, viz: the transfer of his beautiful farm, by arbitrary power, into city lots, and the death of his wife and one of his daughters.

In 1857, the Legislature of Michigan passed an "Act to enlarge the corporate limits of the city of Detroit," the effect of which was to subject Mr. Woodbridge's farm to the orders, stringent regulations, and ordinances of the corporate authorities of that city. From the day of its inception, he looked upon this movement as a direct interference with his rights; as unjust, oppressive, and ruinous to his interests and those of his neighbors similarly situated; and he took the thankless labor upon himself to combat and prevent the natural consequences of the special legislation alluded to. Letters, memorials, and arguments of great length and ability were prepared by him; but the lawyer who had been so successful for nearly half a century in defending the rights of others, was doomed to be unsuccessful in pleading his own cause, and that the most annoying one of his whole life. It was undoubtedly to his credit that as a man, in this contest he thought more of the comforts of his family, of old associations, and of his rural enjoyments, than he

did of suddenly accumulating a fortune, and hence the blame which may occasionally have been cast upon him by the worshippers of mammon. To give an analysis of his various arguments, or to reprint those papers in full would not comport with the design of this volume; but by way of giving an insight into his mind on the exciting theme, a few disconnected paragraphs will be submitted.

The key-note of all that he thought was to be found undoubtedly in this assertion: "American citizens are not accustomed to remain long quiet under the galling chains of oppression."

In view of the declaration which the authorities had alleged, that the cutting up of his farm and the destruction of his old home would be to his advantage, he indignantly replies as follows: "Who has a better right to judge, whether the work in question will benefit him or his property, than the proprietor himself? *What* has taken from him that natural and indispensable right of *judging* for himself in such a matter? Has he, unhappily, fallen a victim to some mental imbecility, that he is incapable of judging what is good for himself? Let a commission in chancery be sued out against him, then, and let gnardians be appointed to judge for him! But give him, or his appointed guardian, *a right to be heard; 'a day in court,'* before, without trial, and without jury, his property is rudely wrested from him. It is now almost one half of a century since the complainant bought the place he lives upon; he bought it *as a farm*, he has resided upon it *as a farm*. It was his purpose, as long as he should live, to preserve it and live upon it *as a farm*. Was this a legal, a rightful purpose? And, considering that the substantial wealth of the State

consists in its agriculture, was it not a *meritorious* purpose, and one he might justly claim to be protected in? * * The measure was deeply regretted, and operated as a great personal injury; for while the 'highway,' as such, was of no earthly use to the complainant; it *broke through his garden, destroyed multitudes of grafted fruit trees,* caused the entire destruction of one large barn, and rendered it necessary to remove another. But, what was of far greater importance, it destroyed the continuity of the farm, by disconnecting, still more, the different portions of it, already dissected by other and more useful roads. And besides the expense imposed of building and maintaining adequate fences and gates on each side of it, it cuts off the proprietor from the convenient care and supervision of his stock; from the proper protection of his orchards, and of all his crops; and, by increased facilities it furnishes to secret and midnight trespassers, it exposes his fields, fences, and woodland to numberless depredations, which it becomes impossible adequately to guard against."

Hear him again, as he descants upon the despotism to which he felt that he had been subjected:—

"Can anything be more despotic? Can anything be more offensive to every principle, and every feature of free Government? The ingenuity of tyrants has often been exerted, in devising the most effective contrivance for extorting money from an oppressed people, but no plan has ever been thought of, it is believed, bearing on its face features of more unqualified despotism than this. Nor can anything in its similitude be met with, in any country that claims to be civilized, except it be in the shape of those *military* contributions which in time of war the Commander-in-Chief may levy upon the *threat-*

ened or *conquered country of the enemy*:—Of these, the chivalry of Virginia, it is believed, witnessed a slight specimen, when Admiral Cockburne was in the Chesapeake, during the late British war. It has since been more fully illustrated in Italy, upon the hapless descendants of the once powerful commonwealth of Rome, by the famous House of Hapsburg! But now—and here—and among Anglo-Saxons—can such things be, and not excite our *special* wonder!"

Of course, in their general scope his arguments were founded in the principles of law, and to those not immediately interested would be rather dull reading; but he occasionally steps aside to discourse like the man of letters, and then even the casual reader becomes interested. One of these episodes, now before the writer, is so admirable, that he cannot refrain from giving it in full. After mentioning the fact that the passion for creating *city lots* would eventually destroy all the farms in the vicinity of Detroit, he thus appeals to history:—

"But there is perhaps 'a precedent on file:' Themistocles was a gallant soldier, a successful general, and a man of rare genius; he was a man, too, of great tact and consummate cunning, but he was not over scrupulous in the choice of the means he used to accomplish his purposes; he was of that class of politicians who act upon the principle, that the *end* sanctifies the *means*. His great purpose was to secure the supremacy of others. 'On a certain day then he declared, in a full assembly of the people, that he had a very important design to propose; but that he could not communicate it to the people, because its success required it should be carried on with the greatest secresy; he therefore desired that they would appoint a person to whom he might explain

himself upon the matter in question. Aristides was unanimously pitched upon by the whole assembly, who referred themselves entirely to his opinion of the affair. Themistocles, therefore, having taken him aside, told him that the design he conceived was to burn the fleet belonging to the rest of the Grecian States, which then lay in a neighboring port, and that by this means Athens would certainly become mistress of Greece! Aristides hereupon returned to the assembly and only declared to them that nothing could be more advantageous to the commonwealth than the project of Themistocles, but that at the same time nothing in the world could be more unjust. All the people unanimously ordained that Themistocles should entirely desist from his project.' And is it possible that the *Christian* people of Michigan must go to pagan Greece for lessons of morality and justice—for an illustration of what is due to common honesty and fair dealing?"

But the powers of the State and of the city were successful, and Mr. Woodbridge was compelled to witness the gradual wasting away of his dear old home of *Springwells*.

Before the difficulties connected with his property were finally settled, Mr. Woodbridge sustained the greatest misfortune of his life, in the death of his beloved wife. Neither of them had really enjoyed good health for several years preceding the sad event, and she died on the nineteenth of February, 1860. For the gratification of her children and other relatives, Mr. Woodbridge prepared a memoir of his departed wife, from which we gather the subjoined particulars:—She was born in Hartford, Connecticut, on the twenty-third of April, 1786, and was consequently in the seventy-

fourth year of her age. She was the daughter of John Trumbull, the distinguished Judge and author of "McFingal," was highly educated at Litchfield and at home, and inherited a large share of the genius of her father. In her youth she was remarkable for her personal beauty, and during her maturity and old age always maintained that refined and intellectual appearance, and those highly agreeable manners which artists always delight to depict, and of which, as they were part of her nature, she ever seemed entirely unconscious.

The simple story of her life, from her marriage to her death, was one of love and devotion around the hearthstone of home. With her, the business of life was "to soothe the infirmities and supply the wants of her beloved parents; to alleviate the cares and contribute to the comfort of her husband; to cultivate the minds and to improve the hearts of her children; these constituted the great objects of her solicitude, her most coveted employments, the broad basis of her earthly happiness." Her religious sentiments had been early fixed, under the guidance of her parents; confirmed by the contemplations of later years; and brought more vividly into force, perhaps, by the death of children and by the sorrows she had experienced. In July, 1855, her husband became seriously ill, and on account of her untiring devotion to him, she herself became greatly enfeebled in health; and when they had both rallied to some extent, it was found that they must, without delay, seek some warmer climate in which to pass the coming winter. Following this admonition, to use the pathetic words of Mr. Woodbridge himself, "these feebled travellers caused themselves to be taken on board the steamer Arrow, bound for Sandusky." This was in Decem-

ber, and they were accompanied by a little grandchild and their youngest son. From Sandusky they went by rail to Cincinnati, thence to Nashville by steamboat, from Nashville to Savannah by rail again and, finally, by steamer to Florida. In that State they spent the Winter and Spring months; returned by way of Washington and Philadelphia, and on the first of June, 1856, reached their home in Detroit. The stimulating effects of travel soon wore away and it was concluded that the long journey in search of health had been nearly in vain. And it was while the twain were thus declining towards the grave that their troubles respecting their farm, with the authorities of Detroit, occurred, and in the memoir of his wife, Mr. Woodbridge alludes to those troubles in the following touching words:—

"This indifference of life," (of which he had been speaking,) "was perhaps increased by a change that had occurred in the condition of her long accustomed home; a change that indicated the necessity of its early abandonment! When, more than thirty years before, the family had been established on this farm, she had fondly hoped that '*living honestly, hurting nobody, and rendering to every one his due*' they might be permitted, undisturbed and peacefully, to occupy it as their own. That she especially, and her husband, might pass the remainder of their days upon it. It was not so ordained. To 'let well enough alone' was no longer a maxim to be followed; a passion for what is called 'progress' took its place. A restless impatience existed for extending greatly the corporate limits of the municipality; and before the period of her severe illness, in 1855, earnest efforts had been made to effect that purpose. These were for the time defeated, but afterwards, by a sudden

movement, against remonstrance, the purpose was effected, and the despotic powers of the corporation were extended over his favorite domicile. The numberless annoyances to which its proprietor and occupants consequently became subject, made it no longer a desirable residence; the oppressive taxation to which it was subjected was rapidly rendering it valueless. To sell it seemed impossible, to leave it was fast becoming a necessity; and a total uncertainty as to their future movements, was the disturbing result. Such considerations, as well as the uncertainties in other respects of the fate which in this world of sorrow and of suffering awaited those she loved, for a time, occasioned her great pain. She frequently expressed her commiseration and her sympathy for the sorrowing children she should leave."

But death came, and, to those who were left behind, the sunshine of Springwells was departed forever. She went to sleep in the arms of her Redeemer. For her, therefore, there was no room for regret, and all that her children had to do, of whom she left two sons and one daughter, was to pattern after those excellencies which so much adorned her long and useful and beneficent life!

As Mrs. Woodbridge was the daughter of a poet, we might, if this were the proper place, submit such specimens of her poetic powers as would show that she inherited a portion of her father's genius.

One circumstance connected with the history of this excellent woman is too interesting and peculiar to be omitted in this place. She was a direct descendant from the Kings of England, and here is the record of thirty generations with which she was directly associated,

though the subject was one that she never mentioned, excepting in the most modest and becoming manner.

1st Generation.—William the Conqueror married Matilda, daughter of Baldwin, 7th Count of Flanders, descended through Judith, wife of Baldwin the forester of Arden, created the first Count of Flanders, from the Emperor Charlemagne, and descended from Alfred the Great through his daughter, Alfuther, who married Baldwin, the 2d Count of Flanders.

2d Gen.—Henry I, their youngest son, married Matilda of Scotland, niece of Edgar Atheling, who descended from Alfred the Great.

3d Gen.—Matilda, their daughter (widow of Henry V of Germany) married Geoffrey Plantagenet, Earl of Anjou.

4th Gen.—Henry II, their eldest son, married Eleanor, daughter of William, Duke of Acquehain.

5th Gen.—John XVI of England, their youngest son, married Isabel Talifer, daughter of Agnus Talifer, Earl of Angouleme.

6th Gen.—Henry III, their eldest son, married Eleanor, daughter of Raymond, Earl of Provence.

7th Gen.—Edward I, their oldest son, married Eleanor, daughter of King Ferdinand III of Castile.

8th Gen.—Joan Plantagenet, their 3d daughter, married Gilbert DeClare, the 3d Earl of Gloucester.

9th Gen.—Margaret DeClare, their 3d daughter, (widow of Pierce DeGaresbon, Earl of Cornwall,) married Hugh DeAudley, Earl of Gloucester, or descendant of William Longispee, Earl of Salisbury, who was a son of the "Fair Rosamond" Clifford and Henry II.

10th Gen.—Margaret DeAudley, their only child,

married Ralph Stafford, who was created Earl of Stafford.

11th Gen.—Hugh Stafford, their eldest son, who became the 2d Earl of Stafford, married Phillipa Beauchamp, daughter of Thomas Beauchamp, the 14th Earl of Warrick, descended from Grudeed, daughter of William the Conqueror, who married William DeWarren, the 1st Earl of Surry.

12th Gen.—Margaret Stafford, their daughter, married Ralph DeNeville, who was the 1st Earl of Westmoreland.

13th Gen.—Phillipa Neville, their 3d daughter, married Thomas Dacre, the 6th Lord Dacre of Gillesland.

14th Gen.—Thomas Dacre, their oldest son, married Elizabeth Bowes, and died in his father's lifetime.

15th Gen.—Joan Dacre, their only child, married Sir Richard Fienes, to whom she carried the Barony of Dacre upon the death of her grandfather.

16th Gen.—Sir Thomas Fienes, their son, married Alice FitzHugh, daughter and co-heir of Henry Lord FitzHugh, and died in the lifetime of his father.

17th Gen.—Thomas Fienes, their son, married Annie Bouchier, and upon the death of his grandfather, was the 8th Lord Dacre.

18th Gen.—Catherine Fienes, their daughter, married Richard Loudenoys of Briade, in Sussex.

19th Gen.—Mary Loudenoys, their daughter, married Thomas Harlahenden, son of John Harlahenden of Warhorse in Kent.

20th Gen.—Roger Harlahenden, their 3d son, married Elizabeth Houduss, and becomes the owner of the park and mansion of Earlscoln, in Essex.

21st Gen.—Richard Harlahenden, their 2d son, married Margaret Hobart.

22D GEN.—Mabel Harlahenden, one of their daughters, born the twenty-seventh of September, 1614, at Earlscoln, came to Cambridge in 1635 with her brother Roger. She married Gov. John Haynes, as his second wife, and they settled at Hartford, Connecticut.

23D GEN.—Ruth Haynes, their eldest daughter, married Samuel Wyllis of Hartford, son of Gov. George Wyllis.

24TH GEN.—Mehitable Wyllis, one of their daughters, married Rev. Daniel Russell, son of the Hon. Richard Russell of Charlestown, Mass.

25TH GEN.—Mabel Russell, their daughter, married Rev. John Hubbard, minister of Jamaica, L. I., son of John Hubbard and Annie Leverett, and grandson of Gov. John Leverett, and of the Rev. William Hubbard, of Ipswich, the historian.

26TH GEN.—Col. John Hubbard of New Haven, their oldest son, born about 1702, married and settled at New Haven, and died twenty-ninth of October, 1773.

27TH GEN.—D. Leverett Hubbard, one of his sons, married Sarah Whitethad for his first wife.

28TH GEN.—Sarah Hubbard, their 2d daughter, married Judge John Trumbull of Hartford.

29TH GEN.—Juliana Trumbull, their daughter, married Gov. William Woodbridge of Detroit.

30TH GEN.—Juliana Trumbull Woodbridge, their daughter, married the Hon. Henry T. Backus.

On the sixth of April, only a few weeks after the death of his wife, Mr. Woodbridge was called upon to mourn over the death of his daughter, Mrs. Lucy M. Henderson. This was another blow from the hand of Providence which he did not anticipate, but those who

knew the noble-hearted and sincere Christian, need not be told that he bore his affliction with entire submission to the Divine will. Long continued ill health, the loss of property, and the sundering of the most sacred of human ties, might well have caused him to compare his fate with that of Job, and it would not have been strange to hear him exclaim, "mine eye also is dim by reason of sorrow, and all my members are as a shadow. * * I will fetch my knowledge from afar, and will ascribe righteousness to my Maker." In concluding an obituary notice, which he prepared of his departed child, he thus expresses his feelings in regard to his loss and his interest in his surviving grandchildren.

"This paper is prepared by one, who but recently before the event here described, had been rendered desolate, by a great calamity! By one who, in his deep affliction, thought he could never again feel a *new* sorrow! It is prepared by a mourning parent, in remembrance of an affectionate daughter, whom he dearly loved: in remembrance of one, who, in all the private relations of life, sought to perform her whole duty! Who, as a daughter, was dutiful and kind; as a wife, was faithful and true hearted; and as a mother, was all that maternal solicitude could exact, or maternal love desire! By the inscrutable but wise providence of God, she has been thus taken from her young, her beautiful, her now motherless children, and has gone to her 'final rest!' *They* will now no longer be protected by *her* watchful and unceasing care; nor guided by *her* maternal and provident counsel! *Her* chair is now empty, her accustomed place is now vacant. *They* will hear her voice on earth no more!

"But it is consolatory to reflect, that He, who holds

the world in his hand, and who suffers not even a sparrow to fall without his special permission, is infinitely *good* as well as infinitely *powerful*, and that the Redeemer of fallen man loves 'little children' like these; and 'takes them up in His arms; and puts His hand upon them, and blesses them!'

"Oh! may it accord with His infinite wisdom to screen them from all evil! and to do *more* for them, and better for them, than their departed mother could do, if she were with them!

"How far that lamented mother, as a member of the church of GOD, upon earth, performed *all* her religious duties; how far she conformed herself, with scrupulous exactitude, to the injunctions of that Christianity which she professed; it belongs to GOD, not to imperfect and sinful man, to judge: But it remains for those who mourn her loss, to hope, as in all humility and reverence they do, that when the final trump shall sound, and the judgment of GOD shall be pronounced upon the assembled multitudes, she may be found worthy the merciful regard of her REDEEMER, and be placed upon the right hand of the THRONE OF GOD!—Until that solemn period shall arrive, calm be her rest:

> "Sweet as the slumbers of a saint forgiven,
> Mild, as opening beams of promised heaven."

CHAPTER IX.

Having spent the long period of fifty-four years in the almost daily companionship of his beloved wife, it was not strange that Mr. Woodbridge's heart should have been saddened by the death of his wife and daughter, and that his sorrow should have affected his health. On Friday, the eighteenth of October, 1861, while at his home in Detroit, he had a slight chill, and complained of indisposition, but the circumstance did not give him or his friends any serious apprehension as to the result. On the following Saturday, he was somewhat worse, and the chilly sensations that he felt were attributed to the wet weather. He continued in this condition, with no alarming symptoms of disease, and in the full possession of all his faculties until Sunday noon, the 20th, when he quietly breathed his last, without pain, and almost without warning to the children who were watching by his bedside. There was no other apparent cause for his death than old age. And thus, like a shock of corn fully ripe, in his eighty-first year, he passed away. As he had lived the life of a true Christian, those who were left behind to mourn over their loss found precious consolation in the belief that he had fallen to sleep in the arms of his Saviour.

On the announcement of this event the United States

District Court, then in session, the Bar of Detroit, the Grand Jury, and other public bodies, immediately adopted resolutions in testimony of this public bereavement. The funeral services were held in the Fort Street Congregational Church; were attended by a very large concourse of citizens; and the remains were deposited in the Elwood Cemetery. Three clergymen officiated on the occasion, viz:—Rev. A. Eldridge, Rev. N. M. Wells, and the pastor of the church, the Rev. Dr. H. D. Kitchell, who delivered the subjoined appropriate and eloquent remarks:—

Ecclesiastics, viii, 8.—There is no man that hath power over the Spirit to retain the Spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death: and there is no discharge in that war.

A few hours since, we bore forth from this place the remains of one who, but a few days since, stood among us in all the strength and vigor of his youth. The bloom of early manhood was on him. He fell at the threshold, just girded for the race; and all that noble promise, and all those glorious possibilities are carried over to the life beyond.

We gather now to bear from among us one who had more than filled the full measure of human life. That possible term of four-score years, so seldom reached by any, had already been attained. He lingered among us, one of the few whose childhood and youth lay back in another century. Events that are historic to us he saw and took part in. We have the sense of completeness here. The ripe sheaf is gathered to the garner. Enough of toil, enough of honors; a long and noble life was rounded to the close. Sadly—for such can never leave us without a pang—sadly, but with a sense of fitness, we lay him to his rest. Why should we hold him longer

from the new youth of his immortality? His loved ones had many of them long gone before his work was done; and though, by God's favor, his days were prolonged to four-score years, yet was their strength, labor, and sorrow. With so much to solace our grief, with so little to lament, and so much of completeness in life and worth, let us to-day sweetly consent to God's will.

I shall not attempt here to rehearse the story of that life which is now ended. It has already been told, and will often be again. What work God gave him to do, and what fitness for that work; how large a place he made for him in his providence, and how well he filled it—all this is well known, and needs no repetition here. Yet, far beyond all that can be seen and told, this was a man who silently touched and moulded more than we are told. Deep through the tangled web of our national and State history runs an unobtrusive thread of his influence, to which we owe more than we can know. His touch swayed our destiny far beyond all that we can recognize. Lay all your garlands on his bier, ye who know his youth and early worth; repeat the story of his service to God, and man, and his country; the tribute of the Bar and the Senate are due to him; lay all your honors on his tomb; let the old colony and the early State of Michigan do homage to him who passes away from the living to-day; and yet there remains an untold history of his worth and his works, a sum of good which forms an inheritance for our city, and State, and country, far beyond all that will be uttered in his praise. At many a crisis it is given to such a man to do more than can be told of him.

It is more suitable that I should speak of him in another aspect of his character and life, more hidden,

and yet touching deepest all his worth and work. For more than twelve years past it has been my privilege, as a pastor, to know this soul that has passed from us, to commune with him in his trials, in his weakness and many griefs. I testify to you, all who speak of his worth and do honor to his work, that the root of all this ran deeper than you can tell. This man loved and feared God, and ever stayed his soul on the Most High. It was this that underlay his patriotism. What he did was done in all this, as one who feared God. And in much trial of weakness and bereavement he rested with the serenity of a chastened and philosophic spirit on the hidden sources of Christian strength. One by one he laid away from him the loved ones of his earlier days—all those who were most precious to the heart—outliving all that was dearest and most near—yet ever strong to do this by the upholding of a Christian faith that rested on the blood of atonement. He stayed his soul on God and had peace with him through our Lord Jesus Christ. And in the strength of this trust he endured to the end, and met death with the serene composure of the Christian.

But the lesson of our text has special emphasis to-day. "There is no discharge in this war." Death has the whole broad field of humanity for his own, and soon or late he reaps it all. Here to-day he has commission to gather from among us a young man in the excellence of his strength and an old man in the ripeness of dignity and the fullness of days. "There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit in the day of death."

But, thanks be to God, though there be no discharge in this war, through Christ Jesus there is a victory in

it. We may triumph over death by faith in Him who gave Himself for us, and who, dying, abolished death and brought life and immortality to light. And this victory we claim to-day. He is not dead but gone forward upon the life beyond. And long since he trusted that, by the renewing of Divine grace, he had hidden his life with Christ in God. And this is the victory which God gives to such:

First—That by faith in an Almighty and sympathizing Saviour, the soul of His child shall in this life be stayed on God, and have peace. And when the days of darkness come, which are many; when sorrow and trial assail him; when one by one his loved ones fall around him, and when at last he, too, comes to walk through the dark passage of death, leaning on God, the Christian feels no ill.

Second—There is victory to the believer in the deliverance which Christ secured to him from the penalty and power of sin. Penitent and pardoned, being justified by faith, he has not only peace now, but assurance of a redeemed and ennobled life beyond the grave. The sting of death is sin; but propitiating blood has washed that sin away. And now God's believing child can look forward with joyful confidence to a saved immortality, a glorious and eternal life with God.

Third—And yet another point of victory is made sure to us by Faith: nothing of us dies that we could wish to bear with us into the life beyond, not a faculty perishes, not one noble power of the spirit is quenched. Death cannot extinguish these refined and sanctified powers. They are set forward upon the large and better life beyond, to be there cleared of all obstruction, enlarged, enfranchised, and henceforth employed on

nobler work than here. Small victory is that, when death does not emancipate the soul and give it to go forth on the enlargement of a better life and a nobler service above.

Such trust we have to-day. And, therefore, we lift up our hearts amid the sorrow of this parting with a joyful assurance that a victory has been given here through our Lord Jesus Christ. We will comfort our hearts with this trust.

As Mr. Woodbridge was pre-eminently a lawyer, it would seem to be quite proper that we should recall some of the opinions respecting his character, which were uttered by his associates at the Bar meeting immediately after his death. In an address delivered by the Hon. Ross Wilkins, that gentleman remarked as follows: "As an eminent jurist and constitutional lawyer, Mr. Woodbridge led the way in giving reputation and just renown to the Bar of Detroit. His generation of compeers, almost all, have passed before him to the spirit world, and another and another has arisen in our midst to continue and emulate his example of research, and legal skill, and learning. Dignified in retirement as he was cheerful and happy in social life, his name will be remembered with respect by the descendants of his neighbors, and the profession which he honored in his life." Thomas Romeyn, Esq., in his address expressed his opinions in these terms: "The oldest and most distinguished member of the Detroit Bar has passed away. Up to the last day of his life, his mind was as bright, his will as strong, his sensibilities as keen as ever. His death was without pain or visible approach; he was fully ripe and ready to be gathered. Like one

of the autumnal leaves that now cling to the trees, he was ready to fall, and did fall before the gathering breeze. Probably no other member of this Bar has seen as much of him as I have during the last two years; my respect for him as a perfectly just and honorable man: honest in his convictions, firm and frank in giving expression to them, and resolute in the assertion and support of what he believed to be right, has increased at every interview. He was, beyond any other person I ever knew, '*justum et tenacem propositi*,' and I know I will be pardoned for saying that, in his late suits with the city, he was not influenced by his own pecuniary interests, but by a stern resolution to maintain what he believed to be sound constitutional principles. His professional and public careers are a part of our history." The Hon. George E. Hand, in his remarks before the meeting, said that "Mr. Woodbridge was a gentlemen of the old school, and a person of great social and conversational powers. He could sit for hours at a time and discuss a subject with the utmost vivacity. He was a zealous student, and was accustomed to read the legal reports as they came from the press, from beginning to end, and was perhaps the most thorough student of law ever in Michigan. He was very fond of social life, of social meetings, and was always present at meetings of the Bar, where his *esprit du corps* particularly displayed itself." Other prominent members of the Detroit Bar, who threw their chaplets upon his grave, were the Hon. Robert McClelland, Hon. Henry Chipman, H. C. Knight, Esq., Levi Bishop, Esq., and C. I. Walker, Esq., all of whom spoke from a long personal acquaintance with the deceased, and in the most complimentary terms.

The resolutions which were formally adopted at the meeting here alluded to are to this effect:

Resolved, That in the death of the Hon. William Woodbridge the Bar of this city acknowledge the loss of one who was justly entitled to the first place, not only from his age and service, but from his great talent and attainments. While Michigan was a Territory he was her Secretary and acting Governor, her Congressional Representative and Presiding Judge. After she became a State, he was elected by her people Governor and by her Legislature as a Senator of the United States. He held other and subordinate situations and public trusts. In all he was distinguished for courtesy, integrity, fidelity, learning, industry, and great ability. As a lawyer, he was learned, industrious, and faithful to his clients, but always in subordination to his convictions of what was required by law and justice; strong in his dislikes and frank in the expression of them, they were always founded in his own sincere views of what was equitable and proper. He was eminently a man of principle and honor, of fidelity and candor, and whose position and sentiments could always be known by friends and opponents. Among the last of those who stand as the representatives of the early days of Michigan, although he has gone from us in the fullness of years and of honors, we deplore his death and respect his memory as that of an honest man, a courteous gentleman, a learned and eloquent lawyer, and a faithful and honored public servant.

Resolved, That we will meet at the Bar Library on Wednesday at 2 o'clock, and as a body attend his funeral, wearing the usual badge of mourning.

Resolved, That the President of this meeting be requested to present copies of these resolutions to each of the several Courts now in session, with a request that the same be entered on their records.

Resolved, That the Secretary cause certified copies thereof to be presented to the family of Governor Woodbridge, and that we request the city papers to publish copies of the same.

By way of representing the voice of the Press in regard to the death of Mr. Woodbridge, we submit the subjoined paragraph, taken from an article which appeared in the Detroit Daily Advertiser:—

"Though Governor Woodbridge had wholly withdrawn from public life since his Senatorial term expired, and indeed, had to a large extent excluded himself from public observation, he was not indifferent to the prosperity of our city, and had extended liberal aid to several public objects. And he has taken a very deep interest in the progress of the present struggle between the Government and the Southern conspirators against it, anxiously watching every movement of our army, and every act of our rulers. Conservative as he was in his views, he warmly approved the policy of Fremont's proclamation, and maintained that freedom to slaves should follow in the march of our troops. He was a man of many very marked traits of character, and many estimable qualities, both of head and heart. Up to almost the very hour of his death he seemed to retain all the faculties of his naturally strong and vigorous mind and to converse almost as clearly, and judge as correctly, as when in the prime of manhood. It is a

remarkable fact, too, that though he had passed four score years, his eye-sight remained undimmed, never having been required to use glasses.

"In his death our city has lost a useful and esteemed citizen, the State an old, well-tried, and faithful servant, and his family a kind friend and wise counsellor. He died as full of honors as of years, leaving a pure and unblemished reputation, and the record of a well-spent life, as an inheritance to his family and to society; for, strong as were his feelings, and inflexible his character, he was a true, pure minded man, and a good citizen. What better legacy could they desire?"

CHAPTER X.

It has not been deemed advisable to enhance the size of the present volume by inserting to any great extent the correspondence of Mr. Woodbridge with his family and friends; although it will be readily imagined that a man of his culture, must have written numerous letters of rare interest during a period of sixty years. A separate volume of such correspondence would certainly be highly valued and warmly welcomed in future years. In the meantime, however, it has occurred to the editor that he might with propriety fill a single chapter of this volume with a few extracts from letters addressed to himself, by the distinguished man who was the friend of his boyhood and youth as well as the loving counsellor and friend of his manhood. By doing this, the reader may obtain a few additional glimpses into the character of Mr. Woodbridge's mind, and proof will thereby be afforded as to the authenticity of the records herein published. The passages which it is proposed to quote must speak for themselves, without any comments, and any allusions touching the history of the editor must be passed over as of no special importance to the leading ideas submitted.

WASHINGTON, *March* 11, 1845.

It would give me great pleasure to advocate before the Senate your appointment as Postmaster of Monroe, or as applicant for any other office, the duties of which you could equally well perform, if your nomination for such office were before the Senate. But out of the Senate, I could have no possible influence in any such matter. Governor Cass, I expect, will exclusively dictate as to all such appointments in Michigan. His party associations are with those of Mr. Polk—mine are not. I do not expect, out of the Senate Chamber, the slightest influence whatever with Mr. Polk, nor with his Ministers of State. If you desire to persevere in *such* a course of policy, no mode of proceeding could promise you so much as that of obtaining the influence of Governor Cass, if you can, for I have no doubt, but that if he would, he could obtain any such appointment for you.

I am very sorry you should have become discouraged in your former and most laudable project of obtaining a competency, by your own individual efforts and systematic industry. He who is dependent upon office for his support in our country, *in my opinion*, depends upon an employment of all others the most pitiably servile. He soon loses his independence of mind. He gradually unfits himself for any other employment, and trembles at every change of the wind lest his bread and butter should be taken from him. And if he be honest, he almost invariably lives a life of deprivation and poverty. It is not often that I recommend the reading of novels to people younger than myself; but there is one, Charles, which I think you would read with pleasure, and I know with profit to your head and heart, and that is

Miss Edgeworth's novel called "Patronage." I shall be happy at all times to hear of your prosperity, and remain very truly your friend.

SPRINGFIELD, *June* 20, 1845.

I have received and read with much pleasure your new Monroe paper. Persevere, I pray you, in what you have undertaken. The paper is creditable to the State; and if you do not suffer your zeal to abate, nor your industry to tire, I have no doubt but that in the end, it will have been a profitable employment to yourself. Present *pecuniary* profit, you will excuse me for saying, is of far less importance to you than the mental improvement it will superinduce, and the habit it will enable you to acquire of strengthening and applying at pleasure and to useful purposes your intellectual faculties. Character, too—happily for our country—is of more value to an aspiring young man than money.

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The subject of our Lake commerce is becoming every day of more importance to this whole region, and the policy of continuing our harbor improvements is becoming more and more vitally important. How far we may be able to conquer the fierce opposition to this policy which our slave-holding politicians have already evinced to it, and especially that of Mr. Polk, is I suppose doubtful. But it is our duty, one and all of us of the Lake country, to persevere in it. The relinquishment of that policy by Mr. Van Buren, was the price, as perhaps you know, which was paid to Mr. Calhoun for his sudden association with the Van Buren party.

And when the South, with Calhoun, went over to him, the policy of continuing our harbor works was considered as given up and prostrated forever.

From the time that I first went to the Senate, it became a paramount object with me to seek, so far as I could, to reinstate that policy. My labors to that end were incessant, "in season and out of season;" and I have the great consolation to believe that my labors were not utterly vain. I send herewith a report I once made on that subject, which I desire you to read. In your editorial labors you may find in it perhaps some useful hints. If I can find one, I will send you also a report I made on the subject of the claim made by Indiana for a further donation of land with which to enable her to complete her Wabash and Erie Canal. Persons deeply interested in that grant, as well as others, have told me, and more than once written to me, that that report secured the success of the application. You will observe, however, that the reasoning I urged was *general;* and in principle as applicable to our State as to Indiana. Your observations concerning the public lands, reminded me that you might find in that report also some hints which would be useful.

Springwells, (near Detroit,)
July 10, 1845.

South of "Mason & Dixon's Line," there are men of the highest order of genius. The "gentlemen" of the Southern region of the States are generally men of great polish, of extensive literary attainments, and perhaps singularly refined and accomplished in mind and man-

ners. But in this world *there is no good unmixed.* The institutions of Slavery naturally and inevitably produce *arrogance,* vindictiveness and inordinate ambition. These qualities lead to injustice, oppression, despotism. It is the law of nature. The struggle which recently agitated the people of the United States has grown out of qualities such as I have adverted to; so far, the battle is with the South, the slaveholder; but it is not finally terminated yet. The final effort will be made at the next Congress, or rather with the people of the non-slaveholding States between this time and the next session of Congress. Ours is a *Government of opinion.* A full expression of public opinion, expressed fully and with manly firmness, no American Administration will dare—except insidiously and under cover—directly to oppose. It so happens that the South being *as yet* numerically the weakest in population, can effect its objects *only* by *deceiving* and *corrupting* the prominent men of the North. The South knows well enough how to convert the doughfacedness of the North into instruments and tools for their leading men to play upon and work with. It has been by resorting to such means, that so far, in the attainment of their great purpose of extending and strengthening the region of Slavery, they have partially succeeded. There are many honorable and upright Whigs of the South who have looked to this measure (especially with reference to the *unconstitutional* manner in which it is sought to be brought about) with great fearfulness, and as the harbinger of future trouble, civil war, or dissolution! But they dare not oppose it. If the measure be now defeated, it must be through *public opinion* in the North, showing itself through the action, in part at least, of the Locofocos of those States.

Cannot that public opinion be now worked upon, moulded and elicited through the public press, and through other means still within our power?

A very sensible view of this matter was presented last winter before the final action of the Senate of the United States, in a Wilkesbarre paper, by an old friend of mine, a native of Norwich, Connecticut, but long a resident of Pennsylvania, a former editor of the "Villege Record," and then a distinguished Member of Congress from Pennsylvania. As it purports to be in the form of a letter *addressed to me*, I have felt some reluctance in causing it to be published in the "Advertiser" here, but its beneficial influence upon public opinion may be *lessened* by the presumption the Loco's *here* would at once seek to fasten upon, that its publication was induced by *me*. All the *party* and *personal* malice of which I have heretofore been the subject, more or less, would at once be invoked, and thus perhaps, but too successfully, the influence of the strong views presented upon public opinion lessened or defeated. In this view I have supposed that more good might be effected perhaps by its publication first in *your paper*. Being published in the Monroe Gazette, I should hope other Whig papers in the State might copy it. With such objects I send the article to you. Do not publish it, unless *your own reflections and judgment* should impel you to do so. If you have any objections please return the paper carefully to me; if you publish it, please send me a dollar's worth of copies. The author of the paper in question, Charles Miner, was the friend of my youth, as well as of my old age; and I value the original copy far more than its intrinsic worth.

SPRINGWELLS, (NEAR DETROIT,)
February 13, 1849.

I received a few days since a letter from your father advising me of your present location in Washington; that you desire if practicable to obtain the position of Librarian in one of the Departments; and that to aid you in your efforts to obtain such a place, you desire a letter from me.

My position in regard to controlling influences in the public affairs of this State is now such, that I can neither hope, nor do I aspire, to exert any political influence whatever abroad or in the political operations of the General Government. If your own good sense has not already admonished you of the fact—that fact is yet to be learned by you—that the political influence of all men abroad is very apt to be proportioned to that which they may exert at home; a *discarded* politician is, generally speaking, about the least efficient in such matters of all created beings.

Nevertheless if, among the new heads of Departments now soon to be called into the public service, any gentleman of my acquaintance and between whom and myself the relation of personal friendship exists, should be selected, then it would not be improbable perhaps that a letter from me might be of service. Upon the happening of such contingency, (should your views continue unchanged,) it would be quite proper that I should comply with your excellent father's request; and in such an event, you may confidently rely upon such letter upon your renewed intimation of your wishes in this regard. Nevertheless, my dear Charles, candor obliges me to say to you that I should look with great regret upon any combination of circumstances which should

induce you to enter, or to desire to enter upon *such* a course of life!

Absolute subordination among the officers of the Departments at Washington—strict, unmitigable discipline —a blind and prompt obedience to orders—are undoubtedly necessary in the proper and successful conduct of affairs there; but while I admit the probable necessity, I cannot but deprecate the injurious influences of such despotism, upon that generous spirit and proud and manly independence of mind which tend so much to give dignity and elevation to the character of man. *Unreasoning* obedience to our superiors in authority is the parent of adulation and fawning sycophancy; and it is fit to be remembered that in *all* transactions of this life, habit, whether we will or no, almost invariably becomes our Master! Indeed I know of no better pledge of ultimate success and of future elevation of character among men, than *habits* of reflection, of *self-reliance*, of independence of feeling, and of a persevering and unmitigated industry in all our honest pursuits. If, nevertheless, the advice of your father, and imperative circumstances should, in your *best opinion*, *coerce* you into a course such as you appear to desire, then, upon your requisition, I will not withhold any such aid in the way your father mentions, which my relative position may enable me to render.

DETROIT, *December* 15, 1858.

I am sorry that you were pained by the changes you witnessed about the home of your childhood: but I was not surprised to learn it, for I have experienced person-

ally precisely such emotions, and more than once. I love in imagination to recall old objects as they were and as I knew them; when they are actually seen again, the charm is dissolved, and gloom takes the place of pleasure. When I returned, after many years' absence, to my old home in Norwich, I found, it is true, the same old precipitous hills and moss-grown rocks, but the *living* world there had all changed! The laughter-loving playmates of my early youth were no longer there! Some had gone forever, some had become heads of families, some had grown up to be sturdy men with *beards!* I hastened away disappointed and unhappy. The truth is, this is a life of change. In a short period all objects lose their identity; and the fond associations of early life can exist only in fancy, or as you say, in our dreams. I could moralize upon this, but I have neither space nor time.

And now a few words as to the business part of your letter. When I found myself convalescent I commenced the review you desired me to make of my "life and ventures" so far, in this busy world of ours. It was like *tooth-drawing* (the only amusement they have in Gottenbourg, Voltaire says.) But I made some progress and brought myself down, in the march of events, to the summer of 1820; and yet, for old age is prone to prolixity, I found it covering several pages of manuscript. I then casually read a brief notice of your forthcoming work, again referred to your letter, and found myself all wrong, and that what I had written would not suit the plan of your book. I enclose therefore a brief abstract of facts which will answer your purpose. As I have gone so far with the other matter, if my courage hold out, I *may* at some future

time finish it, at least down to the termination of my *public* life. And when will your "Dictionary of Congress" be out? I shall be pleased to hear of its progress and success, and, in the fullness of time, I shall desire a copy.

Have you written to Charles Miner, of Wilkesbarre, Pennsylvania, or have you obtained minutes of *his* public and eventful life? He is a native of Norwich, and about my age. In very early life we were schoolmates and "play fellows" together, and through all the vicisitudes of life we have been attached to each other by a continuous and earnest friendship. Not many years after I was taken to the Ohio Valley, he, with his family, was removed to Wilkesbarre. After he had attained to the stature of manhood he became connected with his elder brother in the conduct of a newspaper at Wilkesbarre. Some years later, he removed to West Chester, in Pennsylvania, and there, during many years, published the "Village Record." That paper acquired for him a very high reputation. The great knowledge, the various talent, and the pure and classical taste which it evinced, rendered that paper one of the very best then published in the whole country. Mr. Miner subsequently became very extensively known and most highly esteemed by the prominent and talented men of that period. Your recent friend, Mr. Webster, was proud I believe to class him among his warm-hearted friends and earnest admirers. During the short time he was in Congress he was most highly respected. But his *hearing* became impaired, and he felt himself compelled, by his increasing deafness to decline a re-election to Congress, and to quit public life altogether. But for that infimity I have no doubt he would have risen to

great political eminence. The people of Norwich were proud of him.

* * * * * *

I am sorry to say that your old friend Mrs. Woodbridge, as well as myself, have both suffered very much from sickness since you were here; we look forward to warm weather with hope, however, and are both of us, myself especially, in better health.

CHAPTER XI.

In this chapter of his biographical essay, the editor proposes to embody the substance of several communications that have been made to him by some of the older friends of Mr. Woodbridge. Although several facts and opinions contained in them may already have appeared in the preceding pages, they will be given precisely as they were written; and as there seems to be no alternative, the editor hopes to be excused for beginning with the following letter from his father, Charles James Lanman, Esq., of New London, Connecticut, and dated March 22, 1866:

Soon after the war of the Revolution, a small settlement was formed at Marietta in the North West Territory. It was a pleasant location at the mouth of the Muskingham River, and bearing striking indications of having been an Indian village of considerable purpose. The scenery was romantic, and not far removed from Blannerhasset's Island in the Ohio river. This island was occupied by a gentleman who had mysteriously found his way there from Ireland, and his wife, a beautiful woman, afterwards exercising much influence over Aaron

Burr, who, in his conspiracy, made this island his headquarters. A few of the officers had located at Marietta, bringing with them the free and easy habits to which they had been accustomed, and it is believed to have been the only settlement of Anglo-Saxons within the Territory. Here and there were remains of the old French Traders. A geography published in London about that time by some celebrated explorer, states that at Marietta, a stopping place for flat-boats on descending the river, there was a record of one hundred horses and one barouche having passed that point during a year, that a large body of good land lay between the Ohio River and the Great Lakes, and that sometimes a person crossed the Ohio river into that tract. The North Western Territory was remote; to a great portion of it the Indian title was not extinguished. Its avenues of travel were Indian trails, the settlers were sparse, and the silence and solitude of the wilderness were only broken by the stealthy tread of the hunter. What is now Cincinnati was then Fort Washington, which was in command of General Josiah Harmar, the father of your aunt Sarah's late husband.

In 1791, Dudley Woodbridge removed from Norwich, Connecticut, to the North Western Territory and located at Marietta among the few adventurers who had preceded him. He was a merchant and successful. His wife was a woman of strong intellect and of great resolution; his children were promising, and were charmed by the romance which they expected to find in a distant and wild country. They were young and full of the promise of hope which was fully realized. The eldest son, Dudley, became one of the most accomplished merchants of the day. As the population increased so

did his business. He constructed a vessel, laded it with furs, and, taking advantage of the freshets, sent it to France, making a successful voyage. That was the first square-rigged vessel which ever descended the Falls of the Ohio. The second son was William, and the third was John who became a successful manager of the Bank of Chilicothe. The daughters were women of intellect and culture, of decided traits of character, most estimable and full of the spirit of adventure. William was born in 1780, and after spending a few years in that wild country, during which he acquired a complete knowledge of the French language—both in speaking and writing—returned to New England. He completed his education, and at the celebrated Law school, under the late Judge Reeves of Litchfield, Connecticut, qualified for the Bar. He was ambitious; the North Western Territory furnished a wide field for enterprise and industry—Ohio having in the mean time become organized as one of the Federal States. Having commenced the practice of his profession, he soon married a daughter of the late Judge Trumbull of Connecticut, for many years on the Bench of that State, and the author of *McFingal.* Judge Trumbull was a man of singular modesty and worth, of great acquirements, and full of genial humor. In after years, when he became by constitutional age disqualified for the Bar, and the home of Governor Woodbridge was at Detroit, Judge Trumbull and wife found, with their children at that place, all that filial kindness and the warmest affection could give, and there also they found their graves.

The State of Ohio being organized and courts established, the Law Circuits embracing many miles in extent, as was the custom, the Bar accompanied the Judges,

often occupying weeks, and their adventures in the wild and crude state of things furnished much of adventure and of mirth.

In 1807, Mr. Woodbridge was in the Legislature of Ohio and sustained a prominent position there. He was well read in the law, his views were liberal, his mind acute and admirably adapted to aid in establishing the principles and policy which should govern a new State.

In the year 1814, Mr. Woodbridge was appointed by President Madison, Secretary of the Territory of Michigan, and soon afterwards Collector of the Port of Detroit. While thus officiating, and through his instrumentality, one of the vessels which had been sunk at Erie by Commodore Perry for preservation, was raised and employed in the Revenue Service. The Territory of Michigan at that time embraced what are now Wisconsin, Iowa, and Minnesota, and the immense extent of country North West, the Civil Government of which centred at Detroit; and as Secretary of the Territory, in the absence of the Governor, it was his duty to act as such. Hence his labors were sometimes severe, and other public demands monopolized his time; and, although he loved his profession, and was admirably fitted for it, he was compelled to consider it subordinate. His law library was splendid and he valued it as the apple of his eye. In important cases, however, he sometimes acted, and was employed by the Hudson's Bay and American Fur Companies as their legal adviser and manager for several years.

Congress having authorized a Delegate to be sent to Washington, and chiefly at his instance, he was chosen the first Delegate from Michigan, in 1819, and with un-

wearied effort devoted himself to the interests of those embryo States now so large and populous and wealthy. He was also chosen a member of the convention to form a constitution for the State of Michigan, and his experience and acumen were highly appreciated by that body, and he had much to do with the policy which was pursued. As a Judge of the Supreme Court, he sustained the law, the character of the Bar, and his own, with great ability; the Bar of Michigan perhaps not being surpassed by that of any State in the Union. In 1839, he was elected Governor of the State, and discharged its duties with signal ability. In 1841, he was chosen a Senator in Congress, and served his constitutional term. Being a pioneer, he was attached to and devoted to the interests of the North Western States, and used his official position and personal efforts in developing their resources and promoting their progress. Among the few master spirits with whom he co-operated—most of whom have gone off the stage—there were few at that period, who were more successful in the advancement of the great North West.

His health was delicate, and his nervous system very sensitive, and he was for many years distressed with asthma, which often prevented sleep, and a stranger might, at such times, think him irritable—but to those who knew him well, there was always within a kind and genial heart. He was a man of great determination, and from his consciousness of right, either in thought or act, he could not be swerved. His domestic attachments were very strong. He loved his home and his library, but when sometimes called out, no man could contribute more than he did to the enjoyments of social life. His local attachments too were strong; and al-

though he left his native State when a child, he occasionally re-visited it, traversed his native hills, and renewed his early associations. On one occasion he purchased what was first called a chaise and afterwards a gig, and ordered it to be sent to him at Detroit. After the lapse of months, it reached its destination at a cost of more than double the price of the vehicle, arriving in a box nearly as large as a dwelling-house. What changes have taken place in the life of one man! Then the scream of the steam whistle was not heard, and no canal meandered from the Lakes to tide water. That great enterprize which made an Empire of the West, was only an embryo in the great mind of DeWitt Clinton. When I first went to the West, I travelled from Buffalo to Detroit on horseback along the Southern shore of Lake Erie.

Having lost his wife, to whom he was most deeply attached, Mr. Woodbridge's horizon darkened, and he died not many months afterwards. He passed away at a ripe old age, leaving to his children the rich legacy of a spotless name, and by those who understood his character will be ever remembered with the highest respect and esteem.

He was my warm friend and adviser from the time that I first went to the West until my return to Connecticut in 1835, and I regret that, of the great number of letters I have received from him, I can at present lay my hand only upon the last two which are herewith enclosed.

Yours affectionately,

Chas. Jas. Lanman.

DETROIT, *March* 28, 1859.

MY DEAR FRIEND:—Circumstances, with a detail of which I will not now annoy you, render me exceedingly desirous, if without too great a sacrifice I can do it, to sell out all the real estate I hold here, and, "bag and baggage," in my old age move out of Michigan:—perhaps to my native State—perhaps to St. Augustine in Florida, or perhaps into the Ohio valley where I have many friends yet. If such a measure were practicable, I would adopt it to-morrow.

In reference to such a purpose it has occurred to me that among your numerous and widely-spread acquaintance, you might know of *enterprising Yankees*, and wealthy withal, who would be disposed to locate here large manufacturing establishments, one or more, on the "water front" of my old Farm. In the whole range of my personal observation, I know of no more promising locations for such purposes, especially if connected with the manufacture of copper or iron. I speak with especial reference to the convenience of bringing here, by water, the raw materials from Lake Superior or indeed from any quarter. You know how excellent and how safe our harbor here is, at all seasons of the year; how easily accessible it is, through these beautiful and wide inland seas, from almost every point of compass; and whether for the procurement of the raw materials or for the transmission and spreading far and wide of the *manufactured* article, how great and abundant are the facilities the navigation furnishes. Nor should the concentration of railroads here be lost sight of. *I*, you know, am too old now—too spiritless and too inexperienced in such matters, to adventure now in such a field. But do *you* know of any who, having capital, would be

better fitted for it? I would be pleased so to adventure?

We are creatures of circumstances in this wide world; all must bend to their condition. I can claim no exemption from the common fate, and must bend too. Old and infirm as I am, I feel that I must get away from here, if I can. If there should seem anything mysterious in this declaration, you will find a solution of the mystery in the two pamphets I send to you by the mail that takes this. In despite of our earnest remonstrances, all the farms from this down two or three miles to "Sand Hill," have been placed under the despotic and rapacious grasp of the authorities of the corporation of Detroit. All our farms, as *farms*, will be ruined by it—and merchants, and manufacturers, and men connected with the navigation of these inland seas, must take our places. They live by it and become rich! I was sick and could not go to Lansing; the same illness prevented me from preparing the memorial (of which I also send a copy to you) until in fact it was too late, until the session was advancing to its close. These pamphlets will tell you the whole story. Please read them if you can muster courage to do so, and let me know what you think of the whole matter.

It is a long, long time, my dear sir, since you have ceased to write to me. Charles, your son, tells me you are low-spirited! Do not, I pray you, give way to such feeling! You are yet comparatively young; you have yet a strong hold upon life; and you have too much genius, too much knowledge, too much liveliness of temper, and talents of too high an order, to be justified in giving way to corroding despondency! Think of all this and realize that it is offered to you by your old friend in all kindness and sincerity.

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Don't fail to remember us to our valued friend of early years, your Mrs. Lanman, and believe me, dear Charles,

Very truly and faithfully yours,

WM. WOODBRIDGE.

CHARLES JAMES LANMAN, ESQ.,
Norwich, Connecticut.

DETROIT, *April* 7, 1859.

MY DEAR SIR:—Your favor of the first instant has reached me: I thank you for it. Did it never occur to you that the *little* evils of this life—in the aggregate—cause us more unhappiness than heavier misfortunes? The latter arouse all the manliness of our philosophy, if we have any, and we meet them successfully; but against the former—the little musqueto-bites of life—our innate pride of feeling does not brace us up against them! I am vexed that my pamphlets did not reach you. Some reckless Postmaster or some impertinent filcher, has I suppose purloined them; but having them on hand I send you another set.

I think you do wrong, my dear friend, to reproach yourself for going back to Connecticut. It would have been well, it would have been better for you, I think, if, as soon as the motive which took you there had ceased, you had then come back. Multitudes of friends would have greeted you on your return; there were none but friends to you all about. Your fine talents and all the *prestige* of success smiling about you, would have secured you competence and honors! But every

impulse of filial gratitude and duty required you to go; who but his much-loved son would have smoothed the way of your aged and infirm father to his final rest? Besides, knowledge is better than wealth. And what in that regard, would have been the condition of your children, if they had been deprived of the advantages of your incomparably better schools? Nor is it unworthy of regard, that they should have been bronght up, and their physical constitutions formed and strengthened in so pure, so fine a climate. Do not reproach yourself then, my friend, that you obeyed such impulses, and think and try to make all for the best. But it is with the *future* you now have to do, not the past. I wish I could aid you in selecting such a course as prudence and wisdom might sanction; but it does not seem to me that I can now do so. * * * Do not give way to despondency or gloom! We are so constituted, intellectually I mean, that, like the Hudibrastic sword, you have read of, the mind "will eat into itself, for lack of something else to hew and hack." Sorrows enough we all have. Do not let us increase by brooding over them. I have little right, I know, to turn moralizer. Philosophy is not my forte, nor do I know that I have any forte at all. But this I know, that I love my friends, and wish to see them happy and successful in all honorable things! And if I could succeed in touching one single chord that might awaken cheerfulness in your heart, it would greatly please me.

Make my best respects to Mrs. Lanman, and tell her, if you please, that Mrs. W. and myself have both grown very old and very infirm, since we last saw her. It is now many months since either of us have been able to leave the house, even to go up so far as

the city—now become not a little odious to both of us. Adieu.

Yours truly,

WM. WOODBRIDGE.

CHARLES JAMES LANMAN, ESQ.,
Norwich, Connecticut.

Another communication which has been received by the editor, touching the character of Mr. Woodbridge, comes from Christopher Bruckner, Esq., of Monroe, Michigan, dated March 19, 1866:—

Noticing in the Detroit papers that you are writing the life of the late Governor William Woodbridge, and that you desire correspondence and information relating to the deceased, I beg leave to enclose herewith three letters from him to me of the year 1850. You may, sir, make such use of them as discretion will dictate, and please return the originals.

* * * * * *

My acquaintance with the Governor dated from near the year 1838, when he assisted me with his great legal abilities as counsel in an important and unfortunate controversy about a tract of land which had been sold and patented *twice* by the United States.

I had often the honor of conversing with him, and called a number of times at his beloved old homestead in Springwells, (Detroit,) and I have never met with a gentleman whose venerable presence, arguments, penetration, and character made a deeper or more agreeable impression upon me. I often thought, while talking

with him, "this man deserves to be President of the United States."

His cordiality was not less remarkable. On a visit to Detroit in September, 1846, with a brother-in-law of mine, a clergyman from Germany, I introduced him to the Governor, (then United States Senator,) at his mansion, and he retained us a couple of hours, conversing with my relative on a great variety of topics, European and American; he prognosticated the political and social storm, which eventuated in the European Revolutions of 1848.

Pomology was also a subject of their conversation, and it was at this juncture that the Governor sent for a plate of his favorite *seckle pears* of which he speaks in one of his letters. He said that the trees in his garden came originally from Pennsylvania, and a truly delicious pear they were. The Governor finally permitted us to depart, although not without some of the fine fruit, and a souvenir to my brother-in-law, in the shape of Fremont's celebrated Reports of Explorations and Expeditions across the Rocky Mountains.

Governor Woodbridge was at that time complaining already of *asthma*, which was very troublesome to him. In the summer or spring of 1850, I met him in this city, and it was at that time that his emaciated looks filled me with alarm, and made me recommend to him to try at least the Rhine wine in the small jug! The nature of pure and unadulterated Rhenish wines was then not so well understood here as at present, and should Governor Woodbridge's testimony be published, I hope our ultra-temperance men will take no umbrage at it, but learn to recommend and foster the culture of the grape in this country by all means in their power.

Of the letters alluded to above, the editor thinks it advisable to publish in this place only the following:—

SPRINGWELLS, (NEAR DETROIT,)
August 30, 1850.

CHR. BRUCKNER, ESQ.

MY DEAR SIR:—The six bottles of Rhenish wine, which you had the kindness to cause to be sent to me were safely delivered on the 15th instant by the "Express"—some three or four days before the receipt of your esteemed favor of that date. I have already made much progress in its consumption, and cannot hesitate in renewing my testimony in favor of its agreeable, healthy, and restorative qualities. It came, too, precisely at a time when I wanted it most, having been reduced by my previous illness to the weakness of absolute infancy. I find nothing more useful nor pleasant than this light and healthy drink. But much as I esteem it, I cannot consent to encroach any further upon the store you had the providence to provide of it for Mrs. Bruckner. Independent of the agreeable and *recuperative* qualities of the drink, ancient associations of home and of the "father-land," must give to it for Mrs. Bruckner a peculiar charm, which it would be very gross selfishness in me to deprive her of—and I beg you to understand that I am not capable of harboring so unkind a wish!

Had your friend in Monroe still retained the supply he originally had, and at so low a price as you mentioned to me, I should have been pleased to have given him the money for a barrel of it. But as I am circumstanced I must forego the gratification it would have given me, and, making a virtue of necessity, (as poor

human nature is wont to do,) learn to practice the *Christian* precept of *self-denial* in this particular. I can have no expectation that the regular importers for sale of that article could afford to sell it here, at anything like the price at which this might have been obtained, and being entirely out of business, now that I am so suddenly dropt down from all public employ; having always freely expended the whole of the compensation and salary which, from time to time, accrued to me, as a public man; and having no income from any source which I could be justified in applying to purposes of luxury; I must of course relinquish all thought of indulging further, in such a purchase, at the increased price which would be asked for the article. At the same time be pleased to accept my thanks for the kindness which prompted you to make the suggestion.

You will do me the favor to make my best respects to Mrs. Bruckner, and express to her my acknowledgments for the very kind and friendly feeling which had prompted her intention to accompany the wine sent with a "*petit gateau*" *of her own make.* Be pleased to say to her that, as a testimonial of her esteem and friendship, I should have accepted the present—if it had come—with the greatest pleasure, and should have valued it, from a consideration of the kind motive which prompted the thought, quite beyond its intrinsic worth, however grateful to the taste it might have been. Excuse me for sending to you so slovenly a scrawl, and believe me, I pray you, whether in sickness or in health,

Very truly, your friend,

Wm. Woodbridge.

Our next tribute to the memory of Mr. Woodbridge, comes to us from one who knew him for many years, and who is himself a lawyer of ability:—

UNITED STATES SENATE CHAMBER,
WASHINGTON, *March* 30, 1866.

DEAR SIR:—Yours of the 27th ult. reached me as I was starting for home to bury my dear wife, who died on the 28th February, and of course I could give it little attention. And even now I am so pressed with engagements that I cannot render, I fear, any appreciable aid. I will, however, speak briefly of Governor Woodbridge's professional talent. He was a man of very thorough professional attainments, familiar with all the standard English writers, and with the principles of English and American law. He loved law books, and especially old ones, and delved with alacrity into the oldest reports and treatises. But it must not be inferred that he was inattentive to modern decisions, whether English or American, or to the general progress of the science of Jurisprudence. He was a scholarly, able man. In the conduct of a case at the Bar, though always earnest and persevering, he was uniformly courteous. No opponent ever had cause to reproach him with the slightest remissness in his intercourse as counsel. His learning, his wit, his gentlemanly manner always won for him the admiration of the Bench, the Bar, and the bystanders. Towards a witness, on cross-examination, he was always mild and gentle, though by no means blind to his shifts and evasions, if he committed any. He was not perhaps the most powerful advocate in analyzing testimony and exposing falsehood or improbabilities, but rather relied for success upon his

points of law, which he certainly put with great force and clearness. And yet his efforts before a jury were so persuasive, kind, and *smooth* that he seldom lost a verdict. I first heard him address a jury in 1833, in an obstinately contested case, in which Judge Wm. A. Fletcher and Henry S. Cole, Esq., were opposed to him, and General Charles Larned on his side; and I can never forget the effect produced upon my mind and feelings by his gentle and feeling eloquence. Woodbridge commented on the law of the case so clearly, so convincingly that Larned was completely relieved from that part of the task, and enabled to address himself to the evidence—a field in which he was powerful. The jury believed them and gave them a verdict. I saw much of Judge W.'s practice for years afterwards, and ever esteemed him as one of the ablest lawyers I have ever known. And in his practice, though always faithful to his client, and earnest in the advocacy of his cause, he was scrupulously honest and fair. He despised all artifice, and never resorted to any but the most honorable means of obtaining success.

His temper, when in health, was always buoyant and happy, animated with good humor and a real friendship for his fellows; and at our ancient social gatherings at the "Bar dinners," he was the prince of wit and good feeling, though never sinking to the low or vulgar. His taste was highly cultivated and refined, and rather easily offended by coarse expressions or unbecoming conduct. I remain, very truly,

Your obedient servant,

J. M. Howard.

Charles Lanman, Esq.,
Georgetown, D. C.

Among those who kindly responded to the editor's appeal for personal recollections of Mr. Woodbridge was the Hon. Robert McClelland, and from his communication is quoted the following:—

I doubt not you have already marked out the plan of your work, and I hope it embraces not only the life of our lamented friend, but a sketch of the early history of our State. The latter can be so interwoven with the former as to make both more complete; because, with the exception of General Cass, there was no man who did more to mould the character of the State than Governor Woodbridge. The history of your uncle, James H. Lanman, is valuable, and there have been published since several lives of General Cass, and other works, which would give you much of the requisite material. Besides this are yet left some of the most intelligent of our old residents, who could give much information about the primitive days of the *Territory* of Michigan, which in your undertaking would be important.

* * * * * *

I became acquainted with Governor Woodbridge in the year 1833, under peculiar circumstances. I arrived in Monroe in February of that year, about the same time that Governor Felch removed there. The law then required a residence of six months for admission to practice at the bar, and as the time had nearly elapsed, we were fondly anticipating admission to the next term of the court. In the interim, however, the Legislative Council met and changed the time of probation to one year. When I left my home in Franklin county, Pennsylvania, my point of destination was Vicksburg, Mississippi, and for the purpose of establishing

myself there. Arriving at Pittsburg, I found the cholera prevailing on the Mississippi, and was influenced to remain there ten months, when the *Western* fever brought me into the Territory. When our court assembled, notwithstanding the change in the law, Felch and myself determined to apply for admission on the ground that our application should be controlled by the law in force at the time we arrived. I was introduced to Governor Woodbridge and exhibited to him certain letters from old friends to prominent men in the South West, and he, being acquainted with several of the writers, took a deep interest in my behalf; and although we were unsuccessful, two of the Judges being against and one for granting the application, I became warmly attached to him. In spite of our opposition in politics, our personal and friendly relations never changed, as you will perceive by the letter, of which I send you a copy. This I understand is the last he wrote, and it is a portrait of his character.

As you are well aware, he was a finely educated, old-fashioned gentleman, high-toned, honorable, and refined. His memory was remarkably good, his reading extensive, and there were few better common-law lawyers in the country. As a politician, he was frank and fair, and above resorting to any questionable devices to succeed. I was in the first Constitutional Convention with him in 1835; in the State House of Representatives when he was in the Senate; again in the House when he was Governor; in the National House of Representatives when he was in the United States Senate—and I always cheerfully accorded to him great ability and the strictest integrity, and say, without hesitation, that

I never knew a public man more thoroughly devoted to the great leading interests of the State.

There are many anecdotes connected with Governor Woodbridge, and incidents in his life, which are unknown to me. Your father was one of his earliest, most intimate friends; and his recollections of the past, as with most men of his age, must be bright and of importance to you. If you, or any intelligent gentleman here would visit the old settlers, you might, with the aid of the works alluded to, prepare a book which would meet with great favor among our people, and be of value to posterity.

The letter which came enclosed in that from Gov. McClelland was as follows:

DETROIT, *October* 14, 1861.

To the Hon. Mr. MCCLELLAND:

DEAR SIR:—I thank you for your prompt attention to the subject of my letter to Mr. Fraser, relative to the right of way, the "Grand Trunk Railroad Company" were sometime since desirous to obtain across my farm: I thank you still more for the expression of kindness and friendly feeling, contained in your note to me on the same subject, which came duly to hand.

The proprieties of social intercourse, I very well know, required an earlier recognition of your polite communication. But sickness, greatly aggravated by domestic sorrows and the constantly repeated persecutions of the tyrannical rulers of this odious municipality, has hitherto incapacitated me for writing and for any sort of business. My apology will be received, I

persuade myself, in the same spirit of kindness in which it is tendered.

I owe a heavy debt to my son, (Dudley B. Woodbridge,) for services most faithfully rendered since he was twenty-one years old; services which I have not the means to requite. All the property I own within the limits of this corporation, if sold at public auction, (as it is manifestly intended by my oppressors to do,) would not by a large sum, I am persuaded, sell for enough to pay for the enormous burthens they have imposed upon me. The Legislature have treated with contumely my repeated applications for relief; and from an *elective* judiciary, from Judges who owe their coveted offices, and their continuance in them, to the favour of a mob of interested jobbers, what relief, considering the general character of excited human nature, could I rationally expect?

Almost all I own on earth is, unhappily, within the grasp of these despotic rulers; and I am therefore without protection, subject to be despoiled of it at their pleasure. My farm, however, (private claim, Nos. 22 and 248,) extends a short distance beyond the limits of the corporation, being a fraction of fifteen or twenty acres. This, happily, the corporation has no power over —and this, (together with the body of my farm within the city, constituting almost all I own on earth,) remains as yet beyond the reach of their rapacity. This, therefore, I have promised to convey to my son, and have waited only for the final adjustment of the matter of the right of way, which recently your friends of the "Grand Trunk" have been desirous to procure; for this "way" will be comprehended within the small tract I have promised to my son. The money to be paid for

it will, it is true, accrue to my son when paid. But still, as the negotiation for its purchase began with the agent of the "Grand Trunk" and myself, I have thought it better that it should be concluded while the title still remains with me. I had hoped, considering what had passed between Mr. Fraser and myself, that a definite proposition—a defined sum as the fair price of the right—would have been proposed to me; which I might accept, with or without modification: such being, I thought, the most simple and easiest mode of adjusting the whole matter. Be pleased to consider it, and if it suit you, converse with my son (who hands this to you) on the subject. I shall not be willing, at any rate, to settle the matter except upon terms he will consent to. This being done, I shall be gratified by an opportunity to converse with you personally on the subject; and if you concur in that view, please arrange with my son when and how the matter shall be conducted.

In reference to the condition of my health, I cannot promise that I can call at your residence. But I hope I need not say to you that I do not forget the few friends that remain to me of my ancient acquaintances, among whom I have always taken the liberty to comprise *you*—and that it will give me pleasure, if not too much borne down by age and sickness, at all times to see you at my own residence.

In the mean time, I remain, dear sir, with much esteem,

Very truly yours,

Wm. Woodbridge.

Be pleased to accept a few pears—the product of my garden. They were good when last week I put them up for you, but I could not send them up to you

then, and I fear they may have become too ripe, and perhaps in part decayed now.

Yours truly, W. W.

Another tribute of respect which the editor thinks it advisable to publish at present, is from one who, while a resident of Michigan, reflected honor upon her good name:—

NIAGARA FALLS, NEW YORK,
April 25, 1866.

DEAR SIR:—Although I knew Governor Woodbridge some twenty years and during four years of his Senatorial term quite intimately, my recollections of him are quite general and would possess little value to his biographer. I knew him first in 1827, as the then Secretary of the Territory of Michigan, and as a distinguished (both for his learning and seniority) member of the Bar. He was always eminent at the terms of the Supreme Court, taking part in most if not all the important causes, and always arguing them with great learning and ability, as well as persistently. His field of professional labor in the courts was in the argument of questions of law, rather than in trials by jury, being in his tastes more the lawyer than the advocate. He had studied very thoroughly the common law of England and was learned in its history, its principles, and technicalities. He spoke fluently the French language, was familiar with the English classics, and an accomplished though somewhat diffuse writer. He was for several years one of the Judges of the Supreme Court of the

Territory. But unfortunately as, during that period, the decisions of that Court were not reported, there are no published records of his judicial labors. His State papers as Governor of the State are however preserved, and can be referred to, to illustrate his character and abilities as a Statesman.

During his Senatorial career he was a laborious and able investigator of all questions it became his duty to elaborate, and always shed great light on them. This was especially the case while he was chairman of the committee on Public Lands, at a period when the duties and responsibilities of that committee were very great.

During the latter part of his life he lived in great seclusion, seldom appearing abroad, apparently realizing in the quiet avocations of his home and in literary pursuits his chief enjoyments.

Very respectfully yours,

A. S. Porter.

Charles Lanman, Esq.

From the Hon. Henry Chipman, now in the eighty-second year of his age, the editor has received the following on the judicial character and services of his friend and former associate on the Bench—

Mr. Woodbridge having resigned the office of Secretary of the Territory of Michigan, the Hon. James Witherell, one of the Judges of the Supreme Court of the Territory, was appointed to supply the vacancy. His first appearance on the Bench of that Court was in May, 1828. He had previously occupied his time, not

otherwise due to his official station, in the practice of law, and undisputedly stood at the head of the profession in Michigan. His judicial associates were Solomon Sibley, an old resident and lawyer, and a former Delegate of the Territory in Congress; and myself, a native of Vermont, who had been in the practice of the law in South Carolina and removed to Detroit in 1824.

Judge Woodbridge was a well-read lawyer, and profoundly versed in and familiar with the practical and elementary principles of the law, and was eminently fitted, in manner and habit of mind, to fulfil the most useful and acceptable qualifications of Judge. "*Suaviter in modo, et fortiter in re*," was a favorite maxim of his life, exhibited in all his social and public relations. The practical usefulness of this maxim was no where so applicable and beautifully illustrated as in his judicial character.

The Ordinance of 1787, passed by the old Continental Congress for the government of the Territory north west of the river Ohio, was the organic law of the first and each succeeding Territory formed out of the public domain. Thus imparting, as it were, the first breath of political life into the then feeble infantine settlements scattered over the surface of the vast North Western wilderness, and which, from its small beginning, has grown in population, wealth, and power to a magnitude sufficient to make it an empire of itself.

In 1799, just after the new Federal Constitution went into effect, Congress adopted the Ordinance of 1787, with only such alterations as were necessary to adapt its provisions to the requirements of that Constitution.

Under this ordinance the judicial power of the Terri-

tory was lodged in three Judges, having common law power, to be appointed by the President of the United States, with the consent of the Senate, to hold their offices during good behaviour. This tenure was afterwards reduced to a term of four years, and this was the term for which Judge Woodbridge and his associates were appointed.

The jurisdiction of the Court was varied and extensive, embracing general chancery and common law powers; cognizance of criminal cases arising under the Territorial as well as the United States laws, appellate jurisdiction over the County Courts of the Territory, and original cognizance, the same as in District and Circuit Courts of the United States, in matters relating to violations of the revenue laws of the United States, and in all other suits arising in the Territory in which the United States was a party.

At this period, and not till Michigan had became a State, were there any published reports of judicial decisions in the Territory. The practising lawyers were from different States, educated and partial to whatever was peculiar or exceptionable in the practice and decisions of their several States. It must also be remembered that the society and institutions of the Territory were, at that time, in an initial state of formation; in which state it may well be believed that a greater degree of diverse speculative opinions prevailed than in older and settled communities.

Under the existence of this state of things, it is not strange that a necessity was often imposed upon the Court to examine into the elementary principles on which the law of the case depended.

In every discussion of this nature, the learning and

industry of Judge Woodbridge was found equal to the exigency of the case and to a clear and satisfactory solution of the most difficult questions, in conformity with the best approved judicial precedents.

During Judge Woodbridge's term of office, a case was introduced in Court which, for the time, produced some excitement and was unfairly commented upon by some of the party papers of the day, and is therefore entitled to notice.*

One John Reed had been tried in the Court before a jury and found guilty. The defendant applied for a new trial upon the grounds set forth in his motion, which the Court deemed valid and sufficient to entitle him to a new hearing. One John P. Sheldon, the publisher of the Detroit Gazette, undertook, in his paper, to review the grounds upon which the new trial was granted, suppressing some and misrepresenting other parts of the case, and making a very gross and abusive attack upon the Judges. The defendant produced the publication in Court and moved for a continuance, on the ground that the publication was calculated, materially, to impair his chance for a fair trial at the then present term of the Court. The continuance was granted. The offensive publication being thus brought to the notice of the Court, the Attorney General of the Territory thereupon filed an Information in Court charging Sheldon with the publication containing matter injuriously affecting the rights of a suitor in Court, and "manifestly scandalously and contemptuously of and concerning

*A few copies of the report of the case were published at the time, one of which may be found in the depository of the Historical Society of Michigan, in Detroit.

the Court, its judicial proceedings, and Judges thereof."

On the appearance of Sheldon to answer to the charge, he admitted and justified the publication, and in answer to interrogatories failed to purge himself of the contempt, denying the jurisdiction of the court, setting its power at defiance, and claiming, under the constitutional guarantee of freedom of the Press, the right to publish whatever HE *believed* to be true of the proceedings of the court; and in his written argument, read to the court, boasted that he had "*scourged* one set of Judges off the Bench and most of them out of the Territory."

I, in giving my opinion, confined myself principally to an exposition of the law of contempts, and reviewed the prominent decisions on that subject in England and the United States.

Judge Woodbridge, in his delivered opinion, rested mainly in explaining the true grounds and reasons for granting the new trial in contrast with the false and disingenuous published statement of the respondent, and commenting upon the gross errors and mischievous tendency of the article in question. The conclusion arrived at was irresistable, and the respondent was sentenced to pay a fine of one hundred dollars and costs, and stand committed till the same was paid.

The respondent not having come out of the trial with the honor and *eclat* he expected, and though able to pay the fine, chose to suffer a voluntary imprisonment, with the intent, no doubt, to make his malicious assault upon the Judges more effectual by enlisting public sympathy in his behalf. Spasmodic efforts were made from time to time by the respondent and his little anti-court mob, to keep alive the dying excitement, by getting up meet-

ings in the jail and passing inflammatory resolutions, setting on foot a shilling subscription to pay the fine and a memorial to the President for the immediate removal of the Judges. All these efforts proved a total failure.

The movers and abettors of this disreputable affair, were so rebuked by the calm but firm action of the Court, and the setting of public sentiment against them, that they slunk from their vain and mischievous attempts, and the ephemeral excitement soon died away. No similar attempt has been made since, under the Territorial or State Governments of Michigan, to interfere with or transfer the duties and proceedings of the lawfully constituted judicial authorities to the forum of the public Press.

Judge Woodbridge in his politics was a disciple of the Washington school, whose principles he had imbibed in early life from his association with the founders of the Republic and framers of the federal constitution. He was truly national and conservative in his views and feelings, and always a devoted friend of the Union.

He could never stoop to play the political partisan for his own advancement or aggrandizement, but always carried his political opinions as parts of his private conscience and personal integrity, and never allowed a difference of political opinion to interfere with his social relations or public duties.

Judge Woodbridge's judicial term of four years expired in one of the first years of General Jackson's Administration, at a time when the spirit of party intolerance seemed to dominate the hour, and the doctrine that "to the victors belonged the spoils" was received as equally pertinent to the behests of party as to the

laws of war, and as Judge Woodbridge and myself were not supporters of General Jackson, our places were supplied by favored party suppliants from other States.

But this displacement of Judge Woodbridge did not lessen him in the estimation of his fellow-citizens of Michigan, who a few years after elected him Governor of the State and subsequently a Senator in Congress.

Our next tribute will conclude this chapter. It was written by one who shall be nameless in this place, but by one who was as competent to give an opinion as to his character as any other of his devoted friends:—

The Veteran Lawyer.

The Supreme Court, though attended by the evils of *certiorari,* is not without its corresponding pleasure. On the table of the inner Bar, you may observe a large and well-worn hat, which rises like a cupola from a mass of books and papers around it. That hat bespeaks to the young and old members of the Bar a battle in which all the heavy artillery of logic and eloquence is to be wielded. By the side of the table sits its owner, around whose temples care and age begin to appear; and as he rests his head upon his hand, and raises a large and glowing eye upon him who is addressing the Bench, you observe a serious yet withal incredulous air, which seems to admit the arguments of the speaker as entitled to respect, but to doubt the principles he has espoused. He is marshalling his thoughts, and, though great fire and

impetuosity are manifested by the rolling eye, yet the broad lid, the old brown surtout, and the lines about the mouth, show that his ardor has been disciplined by study and contact with keen intellects: while, by his quiet manner, you perceive that he courts not the contest which is glowing around him. If any thing, he seems averse to the conflict. The client is by his side; and *his* calmness and assured air induce you to ask—*How this is?* That seeming indifference is the result of many conflicts—it is the composure of him who, though not averse to fame, has won too many laurels to be greedy of more; who has overthrown so many opponents, that he would, if he could, tilt with none. It is the air of a veteran black letter lawyer, who, by assiduous study and exhausting thought, has maintained his foothold at the head of his profession; and who knows that youth, ambition, discipline, experience, and intellectual vigor are eagerly engaged in disputing with him his proud pre-eminence. He knows this, and he wastes no gestures, no words, but calmly reserves all his physical and mental resources for a field where mind, however powerful, must be aided by physical strength. He knows how much is required for success at the Bar, and could you trace him from his lamp, through his library, through his brief, down to the time when he glides into court and takes his seat before you, no reason would be sought for his jaded air. His opponent has now rested, and the apathy begins to dissolve. With a slight cough and a half questioning manner, he bows to the court and asks if he shall proceed. The young members draw up their chairs, the Judges resume their pens, and after taking from his pocket his brief he proceeds in reply to him who has just closed. You are at a loss to know

what are his points, which side even he is going to take, and for a moment doubtful whether he is not about to fail altogether. But his voice becomes clear, his sigh less frequent, and as he steps back from the position first assumed, and folds his arms gracefully before him, you see the champion putting on the armor for the combat. He now starts with some general proposition, and so familiar that you at once receive it, accompanied by a most fair and apostolic manner, where no guile nor even the semblance of artifice appears. There is no rush, no bustle, no effort; it is a calm and clear and gradual set out, as if to narrate an interesting story, or state an ordinary incident. He goes on, and you are still unconscious of any thing being taken away from the pile which his adversary has built; yet you are interested and attentive. The speaker grows a little warmer, and at times you perceive some allusion to his opponent's remarks, but nothing which looks like the hand to hand conflict, where blows are aimed and blows are warded. There is no clashing of steel or ringing of cuirass; there seems indeed no enemy before him. He is so frank, so cool, so general, so much in the abstract, and yet so engaging, that what he says is rather the lecture of a Judge than the disputation of the polemic. He is traversing here, and there ranging through the stores of ancient reports, and pouring out volumes of learning and moral essays; yet he has no books, no notes to refresh his memory, and as yet you wonder how he is to use them. But decide not too quickly. His easy and familiar manner have taken you away from the investigation of his argument, as the deep and steady stream hides the force of the current which is hurrying you fast from surrounding objects. He calls for a glass of water. You look

back to the point whence he started, and the pile of his adversary's arguments which frowned down upon you when near, whose hight seemed beyond your range, and depth beyond the memory of man, is now a dim and shadowy object; its features, which a moment before were bold and strong, are now indistinct and vapory; its beauty and strength are lost in the distance. You rouse as it were from a spell, and, as he resumes, that which was fragmentary now finds its corresponding fragment, piece to piece. The vague becomes specific, the old is by the side of the new—the ethical essay and the technical jargon are harmonized, and the whole blended together rises up before you, a perfect legal argument. It is then that what seemed an interminable labyrinth of old and feudal customs, becomes the avenues to truth, and that from the Gothic arches and antiquated institutions of the past, the full light of law and reason stream down to illuminate, explain, and make clear the present; it is then, too, that you really begin to appreciate the speaker's power, and to forget in his expositions, analogies, and amplifications all that has been said by his antagonist; in a word, you are convinced—how or why you care not—you feel the fact, and are content. Space will not allow me to dwell upon his other peculiarities, particularly his illustrations drawn from men and things, when questions involving the immediate liberty or reputation of the parties are at stake. To such he brings not only the learning of the past but that of the present, with an experience of his own filled to overflowing. He has read deeply from books—also from men; and when the occasion justifies his touching upon the chords of the human heart, no man sweeps them with a more masterly hand.

Such are a few of the many traits, which characterize William Woodbridge's legal efforts; and as he leaves the court room, with his books tied up in his red handkerchief, you know that the Bar for that day has lost one of its brightest ornaments. But it is not solely our purpose to speak of him as an able lawyer. He has won laurels in the councils of his country, and whether advocating the claims of our infant Territory in Congress, or enforcing our rights to our soil, or dispensing the duties of acting Governor, moulding the free principles of *seventy-six* to our State Constitution, or opposing in our Legislature the aggressions of power, and staying the waste of money, and rebuking the insolence of office; in all and each, he has evinced that fearlessness and independence, that stern regard for the best interests of his country; commanding talents combined with personal dignity, and a high sense of duty, which constituted him the chief ornament of our State. To these add the virtues of the man, with the modesty which has kept him back from the public gaze, unless called out by the Executive of the nation, or the voice of his fellow-citizens. Of him it can be said, that he has never in any one instance sought an office; to him, therefore, we hope our State will tender her highest honors.

It is true William Woodbridge has his enemies; and what man of either patroitism or genius was ever without them? They are to such as shadows to the lights of a picture, and serve only to bring its beauties into full and high relief. We call him a patriot, his whole life shows it, and we point to him from the day, when, as a young applicant for the honors of his profession, he advanced opinions contrary to those of the Bench before

whom he stood, and received the sanction of their truth from the highest tribunal of Virginia to which that Bench appealed. Everywhere whether as Legislator in Ohio, as Collector, Judge, or Secretary of the Territory of Michigan under Madison, Monroe, and Adams, has he enjoyed the confidence of the wise men of his country. We have therefore, in these times thought it our duty, to place him in contrast with the pigmy politicians of the day. True, our State's best interests call for the exhibition, and relying upon the capacity of human nature, to judge of the good and true, we have made the trial, feeling confident that with capacity to judge, is a willingness to reward.

We have styled him a man of genius,—if a vivid perception of truth, and a fervid exhibition of it; if originality and a mental independence in embracing a subject and expounding it; if felicity of language as a writer or an advocate, and a commanding influence over the reason of those in every station, and the electrical power of communicating to others his views, to the exclusion of their own previously formed opinions; united to an enthusiasm which regards no toil, when in search of a noble end; if these are evidences of that high quality, then none will deny to him its full possession.

CHAPTER XII.

It is not proposed, as stated at the commencement of chapter ten, to publish in full the private correspondence of Mr. Woodbridge with his family, but the editor must be indulged for submitting as specimens, the following extracts from letters addressed to his daughter, and a nephew, and with which he will conclude this unpretending memorial of his departed friend:—

Springwells, (near Detroit,)
August 7, 1835.

My dear Daughter:—This is the season for the cholera. If it comes this year it will soon make its appearance, and in crowded cities and on steamboats and canalboats first. Rumor is very busy, and has already located it in many places. But rumor is a liar, and is sometimes *not believed when she speaks the truth.* It is necessary for your brother and for yourself to be vigilant in this matter, but without credulity. Listen to what you hear, learn to put things together, seek to detect error and without fool-hardiness on the one side and credulous apprehension on the other, try coolly to deduce from circumstances correct conclusions. Though I do not apprehend that this disorder is contagious (*i. e.*

caught by contact,) yet I am much inclined to think that it is so far *infectious* as that a person whose habit and state of health *predispose* him to take it, may receive it through the medium of an infected atmosphere. I would not have you *needlessly* expose yourself, therefore, to its infection by remaining in a crowded population where it exists; still less would I have you *needlessly* cooped up in a crowded cabin among those who have it, or where it has recently been. When, on your return, it will be safe and proper for your brother to make all proper inquiries as to its probable existence in the towns through which you may pass, and if to an alarming extent it should prevail, seek to avoid those boats or those towns in which it may have so prevailed. This can generally be done. For instance should it appear by *authentic accounts* to prevail in Schenectady, Utica, or Rochester, or Buffalo, you might land at Newburgh, (avoiding Albany,) and take the stage for *Ithica* (a pleasant town at the south extreme of Cayuga Lake) and thence by the stage, or more pleasantly, if there be one on that Lake, in a steamboat to the bridge near Geneva, where you would intersect the main stage route through Canandaigua to Buffalo. Or, if it should prevail badly along the main stage route from Geneva to Buffalo, and if there be stages from Ithica to Erie, (a fact I do not know,) then you might continue in that *mountain course* through or near Chatuque perhaps, to the lake shore near or at Erie. Of all these things, however, you and your brother must judge *according to circumstances.* For after all, remember that if such be the providence of God, more, much more will depend upon your own close *regard of your own* health, with a view properly to regu-

late your diet, etc., than upon any other thing relating to that disorder. Don't suffer yourself to be frightened (indeed I feel confident that you will not,) but on the first approach of any thing like diarrhœa, instantly seek to check it, by refraining from fruit (unripe fruit never eat) and from such vegetables as would increase it; eat *more moderately*, being careful not to overload your stomach; while you seek a pure atmosphere, avoid both the hot sun and the evening dampness, and all violent exercise; keep laudanum about you, and according to the exigency *don't fail* to use it, avoiding extremes. Of the usefulness of *rice* you are aware. I have steadily indulged the belief that by such like precautions, and without too great a change either in that food to which we are accustomed, this terrible disease may be deemed perhaps *more* within the control of human means than most others.

These observations, my dear daughter, are meant for your brother as well as you, and I wish that *neither* of you fail seriously to reflect upon them. In the mean time, if this letter should find you without your brother, if he should be still with Mr. B., and if you should find yourself *threatened* seriously with an attack of it, then through the aid of your cousin, or her husband, or Mr. W., without any scruples or too much delay, either get on board the steamboat for Norwich or go *directly* to aunt B.'s. When I was with you in New York you did not yourself know how *imposing* were my own symptoms of that disorder. I was myself surprised at the beneficial and the sudden effect, in removing them, of the dry and pure mountain atmosphere we breathed at aunt B.'s. In such an event, (not likely I trust to happen,) but in such event, you will of course take the

proper measures to advise your brother of your course, and where you are. We were very glad to receive your letter from Philadelphia. It came in good time and relieved us from much anxiety. We should have liked it still better if you had given us a more detailed account of all things.

* * * * * *

Yours affectionately,

WM. WOODBRIDGE.

WASHINGTON, *January* 5, 1842.

MY DEAR DAUGHTER:—Your welcome letter of the 10th ult. reached me in due time. I read with much interest your remarks on the altered state of things you anticipated when you thought of the then approaching Christmas. Contrasted with such as are past, rarely indeed, if ever, has it happened that a Christmas has gone by without seeing us all together; and there is something grave in the thought that at length, and for the first time, that day of customary hilarity should be decreed to pass by in the absence of one who loves you, and loves you all I do. But it is perhaps better as it is; better that we all should learn by degrees and with contented, though subdued feelings, to submit ourselves to the decrees of Providence. Though the day was not untinged by melancholy to me, yet it passed amidst the bustle of "carding and being carded," and all that with sober and unruffled quiet. With you at home, it fared I trust a little better. My last letter was form L., and on "Christmas eve." The stockings had with all due formality been hung up, and you and W. and B. were

to have added to the cheerfulness of the occasion by joining in the Christmas dinner. This is as it should be, and many times and often may "Merry Christmas" recur to all who at that table met. I sent a little picture book to little W. as a memorial that I thought of him on New Year's Day, and I regretted that I too could not have joined in the filling of the Christmas stockings. The new year opened upon us all bright and cheering in the natural world, but with a heavy cloud of gloom, and uncertainty, and discouragement *politically*. Our destinies as a nation as well as individually, are in the hands of an invisible but Overruling Power. May that Power in its mercy so direct our feeble counsels as once more to restore to our erring and deluded fellow-citizens that prosperity and happiness which seem so nearly to have deserted the land. I read that portion of your letter, my dear daughter, in which you relate the incidents of Mr. Duffield's casual visit, with deep interest, and more than one involuntary tear obscured my sight as I read and felt the scope of his prayer. Adieu, my dear daughter; deal out largely to all at home the blessings I would invoke upon them, and that many and many a happy New Year may be in store to bless them each and collectively.

Your affectionate father,

WM. WOODBRIDGE.

WASHINGTON, *July* 18, 1842.

DEAR DAUGHTER:—I found on my table in the "Clement House" the letter from Mr. Wood, postmarked the eleventh, and hastened to enclose it under cover to L.

at the Eutaw House, and to put it into the letter box, although I knew the mail would not go for many hours after. Don't fail to write to me even if it be but a half dozen lines. I do not wish to tax you too much, but I should be glad to hear of you every day, and never for a moment forget that I am but two hours ride from you, and if any thing in the smallest degree unpleasant happen to you, do not of all things fail to advise me instantly. Tell me where you live, at whose house, in what street, and what number. I can go to you in two hours, you know; and the cars start in the morning at five, in the evening at four, and at night at two, so do not suffer yourself to feel alone. Tell me if you want me to get and send you any books. When I go next I shall bring to you any in the library, if I could know what you want to read.

And remember always to keep me constantly advised of your feelings, and always remember how

Affectionately I am yours,

WM. WOODBRIDGE.

WASHINGTON, SATURDAY EVENING,
February 4, 1843.

MY DEAR DAUGHTER:

* * * * * *

But yet we know but little of ourselves—we are indeed "wonderfully and fearfully made"—and so far as the limited and imperfect lights of mere human reason can enable us to judge, it must seem rather matter for continual wonder that we can be kept alive at all. For wise purposes we are all subject to disease, and our

duty is satisfied by using, with discretion and firmness, such means as our best judgment may approve, and such as a beneficient city may have placed within our reach; and after all, trust all to the Providence of that God without whom we cannot live at all; hoping always, as we always ought to do, for the best.

You ask me my opinion of "mesmerism?" of the theory and the science of this strange and wild system? I know nothing from *personal observation.* I am not, therefore capable of viewing it fairly, nor of forming any very decisive opinion about it. I have known so much however of the *juggleries* and of the wild fantasies of this world; I have seen so much of *delusion* and wonderful fanaticism and hopeless infatuation in it, that I have become habitually jealous and wanting in faith in all such matters. The most intelligent, in common with the *thoughtless* and the ignorant, are subject in all ages of the world to strange and wild delusions; we ought to be cautious and *wary* lest we should be led into such as may lead to fatal mistakes and to unthought of mischief, for our *faith* we are taught to feel ourselves accountable, as well as for our actions.

Now, so far as I have heard anything of this *new* doctrine, or perhaps I should rather say *old* doctrine lately revived, I should be fearful of believing in it, lest it should unsettle our faith in the truth of Christianity. The *clairvoyance* of which its disciples speak, I understand *they impute* to a mysterious communication with, and action upon our mental faculties, our perceptions, our consciousness, our *will* by some by-stander, some other human being capable of infusing *his will,* his *consciousness,* his perceptions and faith into us; and we are then the *involuntary* agents of *his will,* we see as *he* sees, we

believe as *he* believes, and whether we will or not we act accordingly. If this be so, where then is *our responsibility* for our faith, our own actions? Then again it seems to me that their doctrines lead directly to what is called *materialism, i. e.* (as I understand the term) to the belief that the body and the soul are *one*; that the soul has no existence separate from the body, and by consequence both are immortal, or neither! Now I do not so understand the doctrine of the Scriptures. I say it seems to me to lead to "*materialism*," because the nervous fluid, or that strange magnetic substance whatever it is, seems by their explanations or system to constitute both the source of action and the effect, speaking both *intellectually and physically*. Upon the whole, I do not feel disposed dogmatically to condemn, but I certainly am much further from approving or believing in these strange vagaries. Some gentlemen here has told me that *this* is only an old fashioned theory now renewed, and that in Reese's Cyclopedia, under the head "Imagination," some traits may be found; among others, I believe, some paper from Doctor Franklin which has relation to it. I have been interrupted; my time for sending to the mail has arrived, and my paper you perceive is nearly exhausted. Give my love to all, and believe me,

Yours affectionately,

WM. WOODBRIDGE.

The following letter was written to J. M. Woodbridge, Marietta, Ohio, on the death of his father, Dudley Woodbridge:—

DETROIT, *April* 9, 1853.

I thank you much, my dear nephew, for the melancholy but interesting details you have given me concerning your most excellent father. Your first two notes of the twenty-fifth and twenty-seventh ultimo, reached me together on Saturday, the second. Small ground of hope as there was, that I could see him alive, I should nevertheless have set out for Marietta at the moment, but that I had been confined to my room during several weeks by severe illness, and could not have endured the exposure. Your final letter of the third reached me on the seventh, and for all earthly aspirations closed the scene. I would condole with you and with your mother and brothers and sisters, for the great loss you have sustained. The watchful care, the tender solicitude, the fervent counsels of this earthly guardian no longer shield you from evil, provide for your wants, nor extend over you the mantle of his protection.

On such occasions it is permitted to grieve; nevertheless the occasion furnishes likewise sources of consolation which must not be forgotten. You have vividly before you *his* bright example. Let us all strive to follow it, that we may be better and happier here and hereafter, and thus do not cease to feel that his loss is your gain! This is a world of trials, of troubles, and of pain. He has passed from it to one "where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest." He has passed through the ordeal, and proved himself faithful to the end! He has fought the good fight and who can measure the unutterable happiness of the change! I, too, loved your father deeply, ardently, nobody can tell how much! In your affliction, therefore, I have a right to sympathize—not for his sake surely,

but for *ours*. But we are admonished that cheerful submission to the will of God *is* our bounden duty. Let us strive therefore to moderate our grief. Many things will pass from my memory, but while I remember any thing, one scene I cannot forget!—I cannot forget the appearance of your father the last time I saw him at his own house. He was in the midst of his family—at his evening devotions. The earnestness and beauty of his prayer, the touching pathos of his tone and manner, and the fervency and eloquence of that outpouring of his heart to God, altogether constituted a scene of such moral beauty and grandeur as I had never witnessed—such as I cannot think of without great emotion. Neither time nor distance has weakened that deep impression. But I shall witness it no more on earth!

Adieu, my dear nephew. Yours,

W. Woodbridge.

Detroit, *June* 25, 1861.

John M. Woodbridge, Esq.,
Marietta.

My dear John:—I have received and read with much interest your brief but welcome letter of the seventh instant. I thank you for it. It would have been yet more grateful to me, if it had contained some account of the welfare of all at home. Tender, I pray you, to your mother and all your brothers and sisters, my earnest and affectionate regard. I owe to your excellent sister Maria a reply to her last kind letter to me. I purpose to write, it is true—but hitherto I have lacked all courage, all energy to fulfil the duties which the pro-

prieties of life, as well as the injunctions of affection, require. From your warm-hearted brother George I have not heard a long while: nor have I heard of the well being of her whose patronymic alone would commend her to my earnest remembrance, independent of her own and inherent good qualities. The last I heard of Mr. Smith, the knight-errant her husband, he was *on his travels.* I hope he has not been delivered over to the *tender mercies* of the Texan "secessionists!"

I was much pleased with your short, pointed, and handsome little address to Col. Steedman of your 14th Regiment. In all respects it was appropriate, just, and suitable to the occasion. Your allusion to the "Plymouth Rock" was particularly gratifying to me. In efforts of this sort, we are too apt to be *diffuse.* Plethora, in such productions, is the characteristic fault of our public speakers. "Brevity" is said to be "the soul of wit." In *such* efforts, especially, it is so. But yet that very "brevity" *may* become a blemish, if it tend to obscurity. To those who are familiarly conversant with the early history of Marietta, for example, the allusion to the "Plymouth Rock" is both beautiful and apt. But I should fear that but few of that 14th Regiment could have *realized* its appropriateness and force. How few they probably were, of that 14th Regiment, who were familiarly conversant with the early history of your beautiful place! How few who knew, that the *first* colonial establishment of the great North West was there; and that those colonists—nineteenth's of them—were lineal descendants of that "Puritan stock" which, for the enjoyment of that *religious and political freedom* which they loved, left their mother-country and settled in a dreary wilderness! How few that knew, that these

colonists of Marietta consisted, by far the greater part of them, of the *worn* and *veteran* and *wounded* remnants from New England of the armies of the Revolution! and who, during their long struggle in war, had at length become almost strangers to their own New England! And how few too who knew, that that colony of worn-out Puritan soldiers had descended the Ohio River for the greater part in that *Gondola* which, from respect to the memory of their patriotic and liberty-loving ancestors, they had called "The May Flower!"—Such is the course of thought your allusion to the "Plymouth Rock" recalls to the mind of those at least who can feel the force of the allusion!

For me, your brief allusion is all sufficient: to those who are yet more ignorant than I am of that *early* history, a *little* more detail, a *little* more *amplification* would not, I think, have been out of place.

I thank you, my friend, for your kind expression of sympathy for me in my afflictions and loneliness of feeling. What further evils or other events are in store for me I, of course, know not, nor do I strive irreverently to pierce the clouds of uncertainty and of sorrow which obscure my earthly view. I endeavor, and *shall* endeavor to meet the appointments of God with submission, humility, and reverence! If I should hereafter find, while I still live, the want of that aid you kindly offer to me, and that the soothing influences of your assistance should be particularly desirable, I will not fail, I think, to express to you, or to your more erratic but true-hearted brother George, my wishes and my hopes, in this regard. Mean time, tendering to all at home my affectionate remembrance, I remain very truly,

Your affectionate uncle, WM. WOODBRIDGE.

P. S.—Should the wars of western Virginia at all approach your shores, please advise me of the march of events as well as of existing probabilities. Though absorbed, perhaps *too* much, by the contemplation of my own sorrows and infirmities—my own inefficiencies, and aches, and decrepitude; yet I find time and space for the contemplation of the great evils which, as a nation, are upon us! By reason of the wickedness of the land, the rod of chastisement is upon us! But I trust and hope that out of these great evils good may come! I trust and believe that this wicked insurrection may be *crushed.* That its arrogant instigators may be shorn of their power and be humbled—and that purified, in some degree at least, by this heavy chastisement from the influences of its great wickedness as a People, this nation may be restored to reason and to virtue—to soberness and to prosperity!

ADDENDA.

LITERARY ADDRESSES.

The original idea of appending to this volume the addresses, messages, and speeches which were delivered by Mr. Woodbridge, has been abandoned, because it was found that they would, by themselves, make a large volume, and such an one will probably be published hereafter. For the benefit of those who may wish to consult them, it may be stated that while the messages are on file among the archives of Michigan, the speeches delivered in Congress will be found duly reported in the annals of Congress and the Congressional Globe. The leading efforts alluded to above are as follows:—

Inaugural Address as Governor.
Message as Governor on the Affairs of Michigan.
Message on the Distribution of the Public Lands.
Last Annual Message as Governor.

Speech in the Senate on the Land Distribution Bill.

Speech in the Senate on Internal Improvements.

Speech in the Senate on the Right of Instruction.

Speech in the Senate on Public Lands and Internal Improvements.

American Sentiment.

By way, however, of further illustrating Mr. Woodbridge's style and manner of thought, it has been determined to lay before the readers of this volume the three following efforts from his pen; and as they treat of topics of general interest, it is believed they will be read with pleasure.

AN ADDRESS

Delivered before The New England Society of Michigan,

DECEMBER 22, 1847.

[NOTE.—The Executive Committee of the New England Society of Michigan, being instructed by the society to request of Governor Woodbridge a copy of his address delivered before them, for publication, received in reply to the note which they addressed him, the copy requested, with the following letter:

SPRINGWELLS, (NEAR DETROIT,) *Jan.* 6, 1849.

To Messrs. J. M. Howard, E. Farnsworth, W. A. Raymond, John Chester, and W. A. Bacon, Executive Committee, etc. etc.

GENTLEMEN:—Your note of the date of the twenty-sixth ultimo, requesting a copy of the address which I delivered at the anniversary meeting of the "New Eng-

land Society," in December, 1847, has been received: and in pursuance of the request contained in it, I have the honor herewith to transmit it. A slight examination of the manuscript will show, that it falls entirely short of the plan indicated in it; leaving untouched many topics, a review of which was manifestly contemplated, but which could not have been accomplished, without making the address *offensively* long. This imperfection was sought, in part to be remedied, in an address subsequently delivered before the "Detroit Young Mens' Society." And the fact is alluded to here in the hope that an apology may be found in it, for the manifest *incompleteness* of the manuscript now transmitted.

Be pleased, gentlemen, to accept for yourselves my acknowledgements for the courteous terms in which you have been pleased to make known to me the wishes of the Society:—and believe me to be, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

Wm. Woodbridge.]

Gentlemen of the "New England Society:"

A stranger to the details of our early history would be very naturally tempted to enquire, *why* such an association as this has been formed? If it be to celebrate the landing of a small body of adventurers upon the cold and cheerless shores of New England, some two hundred years or more ago, why thus distinguish the event from other migrations of more recent times? Was it that in character, in purposes, or in circumstances, they were so unlike? What *manner* of men then *were* they whose arrival on a newly discovered

continent, we would thus commemorate? What was there peculiar in the circumstances out of which their expedition grew? and *what* very extraordinary consequences have resulted from their bold and perilous adventure?

These, gentlemen, are questions a *stranger* may well put; but which the occasion does not require me here to dwell upon. I am addressing *sons* of New England: I am addressing those who are familiar with the prolific story of the "Pilgrim Fathers!" Those who have heard of the exemplary piety of those dauntless Christians, and of their high intellectual and moral worth: who have learned something of their character, of their purposes, of the wrongs practised upon them, of their perils and sufferings, and of their indomitable courage. The copious annals of New England, to which I must presume you have had access, will have informed you of their history in graphic detail, and of the subsequent and eventful story of their true-hearted descendants, down to the period when the relations that bound them to the mother-country were merged, dissolved, lost forever, in blood! You will not expect nor desire that in the brief remarks to which the propriety of the occasion seems to limit me, I should place in review before you many details illustrative of the topics to which those questions point; nor attempt to group together, in a connected series, even all those leading events which mark the trials, the struggles, and the progress of the early Colonists of our "Fatherland!"

But there *are* circumstances, having relation to the general subject, which from their peculiarity, although known, may yet bear repetition; and there are incidents too, scattered here and there upon the records of time,

which, in so far as they may tend to display the character, and vindicate more fully the purposes, the principles, and the institutions of the Founders of New England, it may be profitable for us to contemplate with renewed attention; for those purposes, principles, and institutions, casting their influences into the future, have in a great degree given character to the actual condition of society among us, and impressed deeply upon the foundations of our onward destiny bold lineaments of that well regulated political Freedom all profess to admire. To some of these incidents and circumstances I desire to advert, and propose to limit the few discursive remarks which it may remain for me to make, to that more humble purpose.

It was in the month of November, 1620, that the May-Flower, with its care-worn colonists, approached a part of the New Continent then utterly unknown to them, and far north of their intended point of debarcation. From that intended point the weather-beaten vessel had been *intentionally* and widely diverted, as historians assert, by the *treachery* and the *bribery* of the mercenary captain. The devoted pilgrims then saw before them, not the country which had been described to them, nor that which their imaginations had depicted, but the bleak, the unexplored, the repulsive and broken coasts of that which is New England now. Storms had arisen, the cold was piercing, the harbor was too shallow for their vessel to approach the shore; *all* were strangers to the inhospitable coast! It was not until the twenty-second of December, of the same year, that, through fearful perils and extreme suffering, they effected a landing upon that "Plymouth Rock," to which, all unconscious, their landing was destined, in after-

times, to give so much celebrity! The event constitutes indeed an *epoch* which no historian will pass over in silence; an epoch which the philosophic statesman will not fail to contemplate, when, as from a high eminence, he looks upon the *past*, and upon the present, and traces far into the future the working of those moral and political causes which had their humble origin there! An epoch which *has* furnished, and will again and again furnish to the patriot, ample materials for whatever is admonitory in the past and cheering in the future; and for whatsoever is eloquent, and captivating, and powerful in the oratory which he wields! An epoch which the accomplished statuary has already signalized, and which the painter has made the subject of the most unique, and touching, and beautiful of all the magnificent paintings with which genius and skill have so appropriately adorned the panels of the national Capitol!

Influenced by the high consideration in which these founders of New England are now, with one accord, and confessedly holden by *all*, the inquisitive stranger will seek to acquire some knowledge of their early history. His attention will at once be arrested by the disclosure of the smallness of their numbers and the paucity of their means, when compared with the obstacles to be surmounted and the great purposes they had in view. Historians inform us, that their whole number, comprehending men, women, and children, did not exceed one hundred and one, and that their means, aided by a fair but moderate amount of wealth, consisted in their distinguished intelligence and well-balanced minds, in their stoutness of heart and firmness of purpose, and in that trust in the protection of Providence which had never

before, in any exigency, deserted them! The work before them was to sit down by the side of the wild and ferocious savages of that wilderness, and by their purchased or enforced consent to found there a distinct community, *a new Empire!* So obviously inadequate to the end, will *such* numbers and such means appear to him that he will *surely* be led to doubt of the *fidelity* of the annalist. He will *strongly* suspect that *other* causes impelled them! Did they, *indeed,* voluntarily leave the cultivated fields and the peaceful firesides of their fathers, in order, with *such* numbers and with *such* means, to give effect to a project so bold, so manifestly visionary? Were they not rather *outcasts* from the society in which they were reared, and *exiled* by the *justice* of the violated law? or were they of *disordered* intellect, wild enthusiasts spurning the reasonable counsels of ordinary prudence, mere *monomaniacs*? Posterity, gentlemen, will *not* judge so harshly of them! *Driven* they may have been from the country of their birth, but it was by the tyrannical oppressions of the House of Stuart? They came not from the chambers of the guilty, nor from the redundent outpourings of the poor-house; nor yet from the lunatic asylums of the mother-country! But emanating from the virtuous and the most enlightened of the distracted community which they left, and where their sympathies still lingered, they came to form a community of their own. They came that they might secure to themselves and to their posterity, the blessings of wise and happy institutions. They came that they might lay broad and deep, the foundations of that enlightened, virtuous, and well ordered freedom which they loved; or else, and if it should be so directed by the over-ruling providence of the God

whom they adored, that they might suffer and die martyrs in so holy a cause! It was in truth the *crowning* effort of men who, *spurning* the arrogant dictation of the minions of an arbitrary monarch, had determined, having weighed *all* consequences, thus to remove themselves beyond the reach of a power so intolerant, and of machinations so ignoble and debasing!

Nor did this small band of Pilgrims stand so entirely alone in the principles they avouched and in the resolutions they had formed, as may be imagined. The sympathies of the great body of their countrymen were with them; and there appears no doubt but that thousands speaking the same language, the descendants of a common ancestry, and standing by the same religious and political faith, had resolved to incur the same hazards, to submit to the same sacrifices, and to share the same destiny that should await their brothers in the new world! If these promised coadjutors had been permitted to execute their settled purpose, and thus to have added so greatly to the moral and physical strength of the colonists, while in the very *crisis* of their affairs, who would have deemed their project an idle fancy? or that its final success was involved in so much doubt? But, their countrymen were *not permitted* to execute their purpose. Some relief indeed had been extended to the colonists, and accessions to their numbers had been made during the first and several succeeding years after their arrival. But these shipments were made principally, it is believed, in vessels sailing direct from Holland, or other parts of the continent, where many of their countrymen had found temporary refuge, preparatory to their final embarcation. In the mean time, the first Charles had succeeded to the throne of his

father. It is not my purpose to dwell upon the vices or the foibles of this unhappy Prince. If they were numerous, or great, they were expiated upon the scaffold! But I may be permitted to say, that he was educated to believe that *his* authority *was above the Law*, and absolute! That there was *no limit* to the power of the crown, but the *will* of the reigning monarch! That private property, personal liberty, the *opinions* even of his people, were all subjects of his rightful control! He sought to rule without Parliaments. He sought to levy and collect taxes by his own unsanctioned authority. There never was a period perhaps, when the liberties of England were in so imminent danger! At *such* a period—when nothing but debasing slavery, both political and religious, on the one hand, or fearful revolutions and a civil war of uncertain duration and of doubtful success, on the other, were pending over their ill-fated country—multitudes of its people were seeking in voluntary exile, that quietude and freedom which seemed forever denied to them at home. New settlements were formed in Massachusetts, in Connecticut, and elsewhere; and that of New Plymouth greatly strengthened and increased, while every indication promised a rapid and a happy growth to them all! It was in this condition of things that the capricious and infatuated monarch, pursuing the mad and fitful counsels of his demented advisers, expressly and without law inhibited the further migration of his subjects to New England. Alluding to this pregnant fact, Hume, the eloquent historian, but the apologist of the House of Stuart, and the powerful advocate of arbitrary government, thus expresses himself:—"The Puritans, restrained in England, shipped themselves off to America, and laid there the founda-

tions of a government which possessed all the liberty, both civil and religious, of which they found themselves bereaved in their native country. But their enemies, unwilling that they should *anywhere* enjoy ease and contentment, and dreading perhaps the dangerous consequences of so disaffected a colony, prevailed on the King to issue a proclamation, debarring these devotees access even into those inhospitable deserts. Eight ships, lying in the Thames, and ready to sail, were detained by order of the Council, and in *these* were embarked among others Sir Arthur Hazelrig, John Hampden, John Pym, and Oliver Cromwell, who had resolved forever to abandon their native country, and fly to the other extremity of the globe, where they might enjoy lectures and discourses of *any* length or form which pleased them." He then adds the very significant remark, that the "King had *afterwards full leisure to repent* this exercise of his authority!" It constitutes no part of my purpose, gentlemen, to detain you by elaborate comments upon the lives or qualities of these eminently great men. Yet some reference to them seems called for by the connection in which they are named by the historian, and especially by the character which they reflect upon those companions whom they wished to join. What space they *would have occupied* in the history of the times if, with their numerous associates, they had not been thwarted in their peaceful and legitimate purpose of uniting themselves with their friends of the "Plymouth Rock," may be left to conjecture. But that in their respective spheres, they afterwards exerted a most *controlling* influence in the affairs of the nation at home, is abundantly established. Their associations had always been with the Patriot Party. Being forcibly shut out from

that asylum in the new world they had sought, and being men of easy fortunes, they appear afterwards to have devoted themselves more exclusively to public affairs; and it is not unreasonable to suppose that on their return to public life they may have taken with them more of bitterness against the court by reason of their sense of the high-handed injustice which had been practiced upon them. Of Mr. Pym, I think it may be truly said, that the sincerity of his professions was never brought into doubt. Uniformly opposed to the high pretentions and arbitrary measures of the court, English Liberty had not in those times of commotion and peril a more constant, sagacious, and successful vindicator in Parliament than John Pym. Immediately after his premeditated exile was prevented in the manner related, his name appears associated with that constellation of great men, members of the House of Commons, who in those troublous times fashioned the course and controlled the counsels of that House, in which was embodied the concentrated and terrific power of the Commons of England. For many years he continued there, faithful to the high trusts confided to him, a distinguished member. Neither the allurements of the court, nor fear of its vindictive power, nor the fitful and intemperate zeal which occasionally marked the course of the Commons, could ever disarm his vigilance, or despoil him of his patriotism and of his cool, calculating sagacity! He was a man of "large discourse, looking before and after."

Of John Hampden I do not know how to speak, lest on the one hand I should fail to render that ample tribute of commendation to the history and character of so eminently great and good a man, which is so justly due, or on the other, lest I should offend against your patience and

unwittingly draw too largely upon your indulgent attention. Seeking to avoid these difficulties on either hand, I propose then, gentlemen, simply to solicit your consideration of a few comments upon his course and character, made by the same eloquent historian to whom I have already referred; being well aware that even the *meager praise* of a writer whose sympathies were so *notoriously* with the House of Stuart, when bestowed upon one of the most formidable opponents of its encroachments upon the public liberties, is entitled to *peculiar weight*. Mr. Hume says that "this year" (1637, or some time after his intended voyage to New England was so inconsiderately arrested) "John Hampden acquired by his spirit and courage universal popularity throughout the nation, and has merited great renown with posterity for the bold stand which he made in defense of the laws and liberties of his country. After the imposing of ship money, Charles, in order to discourage all opposition, had proposed this question to the judges: 'Whether in *case* of *necessity*, for the defense of the Kingdom, he might not impose this taxation, and whether *he* were not the *sole* judge of the necessity?' 'These *guardians* of *law and liberty* replied, with great *complaisance*, that in case of *necessity* he might impose that taxation, and that *he* was sole judge of the necessity.' Hampden had been rated at twenty shillings for an estate which he possessed in Buckingham; yet, notwithstanding this declared opinion of the Judges, notwithstanding the great power and sometimes rigorous maxims of the crown, notwithstanding the small prospect of relief from Parliament, he resolved, rather than tamely submit to so illegal an imposition, to stand a legal prosecution and expose himself to all the indignation of the court. The case was

argued during twelve days, in the Exchequer Chamber, before all the Judges of England, and the nation regarded with the utmost anxiety every circumstance of this celebrated trial. The event was easily foreseen; but the principles and reasonings, and behavior of the parties engaged in this trial, were much canvassed and inquired into; and *nothing* could equal the favor paid to the one side, except the hatred which attended the other." The prejudiced Judges, four excepted, gave sentence in favor of the crown. "But Hampden," Mr. Hume proceeds to say, "obtained by the trial the end for which he had so generously sacrificed his safety and his quiet: the people were roused from their lethargy, and became sensible of the danger to which their liberties were exposed," etc. (3 Hume, 414, 416.) In the civil war which afterwards ensued, Hampden was wounded in battle, and died of his wound. Hume thus sums up his character: "Many were the virtues and talents of this eminent personage; and his valor during the war had shown out with a lustre equal to that of the other accomplishments by which he had been distinguished. Affability in conversation; temper, art, and eloquence in debate; penetration and discernment in counsel; industry, vigilance, and enterprise in action; all these praises are unanimously ascribed to him, by historians of the most opposite parties. His virtues too and integrity, in all the duties of private life, are allowed to have been beyond exception; *but we must only be cautious notwithstanding his generous zeal for liberty, not hastily to ascribe to him the praises of a good citizen.*" Thus, and with this insidious caution to his readers, Mr. Hume sums up the merits and character of this high-spirited and devoted Patriot!

The history of Oliver Cromwell is written in characters too broad and deep, and is too well known to justify, at our hands, more than a passing remark. The faculties and the qualities of men are sometimes of early, perhaps precocious growth. Sometimes they come more tardily to maturity, and in many cases probably remain inert or dormant, until, with their unconscious possessor, they pass, *never fully disclosed*, to the grave! Man, whether viewed individually or in communities, seems, under providence of God, *wonderfully the creature of circumstance*. Great crisis in the affairs of men or of nations stimulate, strengthen, seem to *create* great faculties and great qualities, suitable to, and commensurate with the occasion! Thus the events of our own Revolution, acting powerfully upon the *mind* and the *heart* of the whole country, elicited and brought into vigorous action a degree and a variety of ability, and of talent, moral and intellectual, which in no age or country have ever been surpassed, and which, but for the crisis which produced them, would never have been exhibited to our admiration! The correctness of this vein of thought is I think plainly demonstrated in the life and history of Oliver Cromwell. He had been a member of the House of Commons eight or ten years before his intended embarcation for America. In all that period he had acquired little or no distinction. He is spoken of indeed, by historians, as being then a man "*of no account!*" The extraordinary faculties he possessed, and of which he was himself probably long unconscious, do not seem to have been fully developed until the very foundations of the monarchy had been broken up, and the nation hurried into all the horrors of civil war!

Whether he were ever sincere in his habitual and lofty pretentions of sanctity and devotedness to the cause of free government, has, I am aware, long ago been brought into doubt. Having no very fixed opinion on that point myself, I am nevertheless inclined to the belief that in the beginning he was sincere; for if he were not, what motives could have led him to retire from the busy scenes of active life which were fast opening before him at home, and in which he afterwards took so distinguished a part? Why should he attempt, as unquestionably he *did* attempt to join the free, the peaceful, and the devout colonists of New England, and with *such* associates to bury all hopes of distinction, all the glittering promises of ambition, in the silent and secluded depths of *that* wilderness? But his great abilities *gradually* developed themselves and became more strongly marked. In the progress of time and of events, he became more conscious of his own enlarged and grasping capacity, and however sincere in the beginning he may have been, his ardour in the cause of political and religious freedom gradually merged in the more absorbing pursuits of his personal ambition. In *any* view of it, however, his case furnishes an imposing illustration of the danger of vesting *unrestricted* and *discretionary* powers in the hands of a favorite *party leader* in a popular cause! He commenced his public career with many professions of patriotism. He succeeded in obtaining the full confidence of his party. As his faculties, by slow degrees, acquired fixedness of character he was esteemed sagacious and far-seeing in council beyond most men; and in the battle-field he was without a rival. He had some good qualities. But he died a despot—he left a story written in blood!

It is fit for us to weigh it well, and to remember that the warnings of history can never, *never* with impunity be despised!

But it is time this digression were finished. The characters and the purposes of men may sometimes be judged of by those of their associates. It is in that view I have asked your consideration of these historical data. The Pilgrim Fathers could not be exempt from the ordinary evils which afflict society. Detraction followed them. Their motives have been impugned, their characters assailed, and derision and silly ridicule sought to be cast upon them and upon their descendants. And it has seemed to me that no vindication of their motives can be more appropriate than such as may be found in the nature of the Government from which they withdrew themselves; the odious prosecutions to which that Government subjected them; the rapid and appalling advances it was making towards uncontrolled and arbitrary power; and especially in a full understanding of the moral, intellectual, and political qualities and propensities, which distinguish their intimate friends, those with whom their sympathies and connections were! and it has been to this end that I have asked your consideration of the condition of things in the country which they left, and of the *kind* of men with whom alone all their associations were; for of the same *genus* of the *same* race of intellectual, resolute, pious and devoted Patriots and Christians, were the Pilgrim Fathers of New England! But they were then called "Puritans," and in much later times the same term has been *sneeringly* applied to them, as if it were a term of contempt and reproach, implying ignorance and fanaticism!

Certainly, the first settlers of New England, were of that portion of the people of their native country, who were denominated "Puritans." But *who* were intended by that general appellative? In its *origin* the term was used to designate the Calvinists of Great Britain, in contradistinction to those of the established Church, and they came to be called "Puritans," from their attempting a *purer* form of worship and discipline than that prescribed by the English hierarchy. But, in the progress of time and of events, it *ceased* to be restricted to a mere religious sect, and came to be applied in a far more comprehensive sense. Thus, the learned and accomplished compiler of a well-known standard work, referring to sundry authorities, affirms that "all were 'Puritans' in the estimation of King James, who *adhered to the laws of the land* in opposition to his arbitrary government, though ever so good Churchmen. These were called 'Puritans in the State;' and those who scrupled the ceremonies and adhered to the doctrines of Calvin were 'Church Puritans,' who, though comparatively few, yet being joined by those of the other class became the *majority of the nation.*" And Mr. Hume, who, it will be remembered, was not more the advocate of arbitrary power than he was a scoffer of Christianity, sustains the general fact assumed by Doctor Rees. Speaking of the transactions of 1628, he says: "Amidst the complication of disputes in which men were then involved, we may observe that the appellation 'puritan' stood for *three* parties, which, though commonly united, were yet actuated by very different views and motives. These were the *political* Puritans, who *maintained the highest principles of civil liberty;* the Puritans in *discipline*, and the *doctrinal* Puritans. In opposition to all these stood

the *Court Party*," etc. (3 Hume, 390.) On a previous page, and speaking of the occurrences of an antecedent period, he says: "For it is remarkable that this party (the Puritans) made the privileges of the nation *as much a part of their religion*, as the *Church* party did the prerogatives of the Crown," etc. (3 Hume, 345.) The Puritans then, the amalgamated party, were those who contended for a *broader* and a better defined rule of religious and civil liberty. They were precisely such as Pym and Hampden, and Hazelrig and Vane, and a thousand others of those master-spirits—of those great and extraordinary men who, *produced* by the crisis and *equal* to the crisis, at length, and at the expense no doubt of many indefensible excesses, prostrated the arbitrary government of the House of Stuart, and planted deep in the public mind those vigorous principles of manly freedom, which, reaching far beyond the temporary Protectorate of Cromwell, occasioned the revolution of 1688, and changed the future destinies of that great People! Such then, I repeat, were the "Puritans;" such the companions of the Pilgrim Fathers, and *such* the objects of their convulsive struggles! But, before one ray of brightness had gilded the horizon of the patriot at home; while all was gloom and darkness and fearful oppression there, the men of the "Plymouth Rock" had already left the land of their Fathers! They had already gone into distant and inhospitable climes, in search of that peace and freedom which seemed forever shut out from them at home! It remains for us to see how far and in what manner these fugitives from oppression remained *true* to their declared faith? How far, when securely established in their wilderness domain, they sought to exhibit a practical demonstration of the great principles

of their avowed creed? When these wanderers found themselves taken to a coast far distant from their intended destination—when the privations and the exposures and the sufferings of a voyage so greatly protracted, had wasted their strength and impaired their health—when the winter storms and unwonted severities of that icy shore, had overtaken and threatened to *overwhelm* them, they bravely struggled with their destiny and yet retained their trust in God! Their self-possession and their hopes did not desert them! But yielding to a necessity which now became imperative, and finding that they must look for their habitation there, they calmly set about preparing a system of regulations by which their young and feeble colony should thence-forward be governed.

This system they drew in writing and severally signed, while all yet remained upon their frail barque. By that instrument they formed themselves into a "body politic," and, establishing a few organic rules, and anticipating the future necessity for further legislation, bound themselves, in the name of the God they worshipped, "to submit themselves to such laws and officers as should be judged most subservient to the general good." After the expiration of a few years, when their population and the number of their towns had very considerably increased, it was found *inconvenient* for the *whole* body of the people to meet for the passing of such laws as were necessary for their protection and comfort. Then by a supplemented compact, they *enlarged* their system, wisely adopting the principle of "Representation." Their first General Assembly, organized upon this principle, was holden in 1639. An increased number of "assistants," elected annually by the aggregate

vote, appears to have constituted their "Council;" and the different towns within the limits of the colony, respectively elected and sent the prescribed number of "Deputies." With characteristic caution, the powers of ordinary legislation were limited, and the great principles of public liberty abundantly secured by a few organic regulations contained in the new agreement, which they termed appropriately enough the "*General Fundamentals*" of their system; and it is worthy of regard, that among those "Fundamentals" was found incorporated the *bold and pregnant declaration* that "no acts, laws, nor ordinances should be imposed upon them but *such* as were enacted by the consent of the body of the Freemen, or their Representatives, regularly assembled." Thus, under a Government founded solely on a voluntary compact, and *purely republican* in its character, they effected a general peace with the surrounding barbarians, secured the comfort and prosperity of their little colony, and continuing to increase greatly in population and in power, they enjoyed all the blessings of a wise and free government, during a succession of many years.

In 1691, it was found expedient to gather, under one Colonial Government, the people of *this* colony together with all the various and detached colonies which in the mean time had grown up at Boston, Salem, and elsewhere in those parts of New England. Then it was that the name of "The Colony of New Plymouth" was merged in that of the venerated appellation of "The Massachusetts Bay." But establishments had been made also, and had grown into importance in other more remote parts of New England. Influenced by the successful example of their friends of the "Plymouth Rock," multitudes of the *most respected*, because of the

most upright and of the most enlightened of the yeomanry of Great Britain, with many of the most highly educated persons in the Kingdom, availed themselves of every fit opportunity to escape from the degrading influences of threatened despotism at home, or from its almost equally fatal alternative, those convulsive disorders which were rapidly hurling upon their country all the desolating horrors of civil war! They looked with deep interest to the infant establishments of their countrymen in the New World, already identified with them in religious principles and in their forms of worship, they now resolved to participate with them also, in the anticipated blessings of their free, peaceful, and happy institutions of *civil government!* This they fully effected. In 1635, the first settlement in Connecticut was commenced; some two or three years afterwards a separate establishment was formed at New Haven; about the same time, the colony of Rhode Island and Providence plantations was founded, and *anterior* to that time, settlers had domiciliated themselves within the borders of New Hampshire.

To review the progress of these several colonial establishments, with their multiplied ramifications, through all the trials and vicissitudes to which they were subjected, in peace and in war, from infancy until, collectively, they had attained the fullness and the permanance of full grown maturity; to recite the perils of these early adventurers, their constancy, their courage, their perseverance, and especially their characteristic piety, and their devotedness to the cause of *manly*, but well regulated freedom; all this falls within the appropriate province of the faithful historian. To analize and to examine minutely the various original and ad-

mirable institutions which they established, and to trace the prospective and extraordinary influences of those primative institutions upon society, and upon the future character and the happiness of their posterity; *this* is a work for the closet and the study, and should be reserved perhaps for a more deliberate occasion. To point out a *few* of these institutions, *briefly* to consider their tendencies, and to delineate *some* of the consequences which have resulted from them, is all I can at present aspire to, and important indeed will be the result, if, by doing so, I should conciliate towards them the general attention, and especially if I should thus happily excite in *your* hearts, gentlemen, a determination to make them the subjects of *your own special research*, of *your own* more extended and philosophical consideration! For I feel entirely persuaded that nothing can more certainly fasten in our hearts the elevated character of those extraordinary men, than such a study so pursued! Nothing can so excite our veneration for their far-reaching and wonderful sagacity, and nothing can bring into so bold relief, that expanded benevolence, which, reaching far beyond the narrow cycle of their *own* years upon earth, looked forward to the religious character, to the intellectual improvement, and to the enlightened freedom of their posterity through the revolving periods of all future time! and, descendants as you are, gentlemen, from the "Pilgrim Fathers," and the proper guardians of their posthumous fame, to *whom*, if not to *you*, belongs the merit, the honor, the filial duty of vindicating that fame and awakening our grateful recognition of the multiplied and priceless blessings, which, under the providence of God, *their* labors have conferred upon us?

If then, in this spirit and with such intent, you should be persuaded to explore this whole matter and look into the ample store of rich blessings our early ancestors have garnered up for us, your attention will no doubt be first arrested by a consideration of that great and leading characteristic of their social organization, the strongly marked religious aspect and tendency of all their settled regulations. This constitutes too bold and prominent a feature to escape the detection of the most careless observer. A strong religious feeling, a deep and chastened sense of responsibility and of dependence upon God, and a corresponding veneration for his character, pervade all their plans and all their measures—and even in this slight review, I should hold myself highly censurable, if I were to pass over without notice *this*, the pervading spirit of the whole! But *any* discussion on my part, of the relations which exist between man, in his *individual* capacity, and the Creator and Ruler of all things, however immeasurably important these relations may be to the individual happiness of man, does not come within the scope I had on this occasion prescribed for myself. *Such* a theme is for the minister of the Gospel: for *him* whose fervid exhortations and whose untiring and eloquent appeals, you, gentlemen, as *true* sons of New England are, no doubt, accustomed to listen to on every Sabbath. Passing by, then, but with all becoming reverence, *this* branch of the subject, my purpose is to solicit your more particular attention to the influences which that spirit of piety and devotion to which I have alluded, is certainly calculated to exert upon society—upon men in their collective and aggregate character—upon nations. The ignorant and the thoughtless may *sneer* at the eminent piety of the early

"Puritans;" the *buffoon* may make it the subject of his coarse and vulgar jest! But let all such, point to the *instance*, if it can be found, either in sacred or profane history, in which any nation has attained to eminence, and *sustained* itself in its elevation and prosperity, whose people have not been distinguished by a fervent *piety*, a pervading and deep sense of religious feeling? "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to *political* prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism, who should labor to *subvert* these great pillars of human happiness—these firmest props of the duties of men and citizens. The *mere* politician, equally with the pious man, ought to respect and to cherish them. A volume could not trace all their connection with private and public felicity. Let it simply be asked where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation desert the oaths which are the instruments of investigation in courts of justice? And let us with caution indulge in the supposition, that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of *peculiar structure*, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that *national morality* can prevail in exclusion of religious principles." Thus spake the man whose memory we all revere. Thus spake the man at whose feet the shafts of contemptuous ridicule always fell harmless and with broken point! And if the propositions he advances be in themselves true, when applied to *all* forms of human government, how much more manifestly are they true when applied to a government like *ours*, whose only basis is public opinion, and whose strength, whose continuance, whose life-

giving principle, are the virtue, the intelligence of its people!

And here, passing to another topic, I desire again to refer for a moment to the paternal injunctions of the same distinguished personage—of him who never advised without wisdom, and who never exhorted but in the voice of patriotism! In view of the powerful agency of public opinion, in *all* the operations of *popular* governments, General Washington thus admonishes the people of the United States: "Promote then, (he says,) as an object of primary importance, institutions for the *general diffusion of knowledge.* In proportion as the structure of a government gives *force* to public opinion, it is *essential* that public opinion should be enlightened!" Let us take pride to ourselves then, gentlemen, that our sagacious but quiet and unobtrusive ancestors—"the Puritan founders" of New England—had nearly two hundred years before the *Farewell Address* was written, reduced those speculative but undoubted truths into a full and practical demonstration! For closely connected with their purpose to infuse into the minds and hearts of those who should come after them, those principles of piety and religion which so eminently characterised themselves, was their system of "common schools." Of inferior importance, in their estimation, *only* to their religious establishments; so, *next* in the order of time, *this* subject engrossed their attention. Their plan was original; or, if not original with them, it was in New England *only* that it was first carried into systematic operation, as a distinct and elementary principle of their social and political organization. It was there that its utility was first made manifest—it was there that the great moral beauty of the system was

fully and practically illustrated! But there, within the restrictive limits of the country of its origin, was this primitive but most beneficent institution destined to be confined for a long, long course of years,—unnoticed abroad, without imitation, and without acknowledgement.

Isolated in position, having very little connection, anterior to the period of our Revolution, with the inhabitants of the other British colonies, and very much cut off from all intercourse with the rest of the world, except through the medium of a direct and limited trade with the mother-country, their institutions were but little known and, *therefore*, not justly appreciated; and there, without being made the subject either of boasting or noise, amidst the rocky cliffs and green hills of New England, this system has remained in full operation, bearing the test of a long unbroken experience, scattering its blessings broadcast among all classes of people, and growing more in the affection of its countless beneficiaries every day! But it was not fated *always* to remain the undivided privilege of the country of its origin. Thanks to the expanded benevolence, to the characteristic perseverance, to the "*bigotry*," if gentlemen *will* have it so, of the "Puritans" of New England; thanks, a thousand thanks to the *Danes* and the *Shermans* of our *Father-land*, a scion was taken from *that* stock and planted in the "Far-west," and it took root there and grew! And when the teeming population of the "Plymouth Rock" had spread over the surface of that country, in which its destinies had first been cast, and its superabundant numbers were seeking *more space*, a finer soil, and a more genial climate, in the primative forests of the "Great Valley;" each car-

ried with him the habits and predilections of his fathers, and each, as he arrived in the chosen country of his new habitation, aided *con amore* in the protection, in the growth, and in the expansion of the embryo system *New England Councils had happily planted there!* Now it is deeply imbedded among its most favorite organic institutions. Its vigorous shoots with richer promise for the future, are already beginning to shed abroad, throughout the boundless West, their copious and benignant fruit! nor has it grown when transplanted, like some exotics, with a penurious and stinted growth, for in the *West*, too, it is now basking in the genial warmth of the public favor! It is fitted, indeed, to *any* latitude, to *any* climate, and so, as it preserve its original stamina, and the great outlines of its dimensions, it may be increased even in its utility and its beauty in the very process of its adaptation to the varied circumstances of its new location. Thus, *here*, in our own new State, a State as it were of yesterday, provision is made in the organic law, not only for its establishment upon a comprehensive and well-adjusted plan, but, as auxiliary to its great purpose, it is also ordained that there shall be established, in each township of the State, at least *one* public library. The advantages of a universal and irrevocable provision, in the *fundamental* law, for an object like this, over any which voluntary contribution or local and conventional agreements in the several townships can furnish, are obvious. But, at the outset, an embarrassing difficulty presented itself, which seemed to leave but little ground for hope that the measure would succeed—and although a relation of the incidents that occurred may seem out of place here, I hope I may be pardoned for alluding to them. It will be conceded

that a *barren enactment* that such public libraries should be established, without indicating any means either to *procure* or to *sustain* them, would have been but idle mockery. But the State had no means: it was just then coming into existence. It had no existing fund which could be made available for such a purpose. It had none which could *promise* to be productive for a long and indefinite period—not, probably, until after the existing population should all "have been gathered to their fathers!" It was then that the original thought occurred to one of the members of the convention, himself a descendant of the Puritans, to meet the obstacle by constituting, of all the sums assessed for the non-performance of militia service, and of the pecuniary products of *all fines* imposed for the violation of the penal law, *throughout the State*, and for *all future time*, a fund, to be made exclusively applicable to that beneficent purpose! Thus converting the very *crimes* of the citizen into a means of ameliorating the heart of the student, and his refusal to appear on the guady parade, "armed and equipped according to law," into a means, "of diffusing useful knowledge among men!" and so it is ordained in the Constitution of Michigan. There may be something *whimsical* in the strange commixture of ideas which the project implies, but it is characteristic of its origin, and like all genuine "Yankee Notions," it has much of the *practically useful* in it. It saved and rendered effectual the constitutional provision for the establishment of public libraries, and if these moneys be faithfully collected and paid over, and the fund be administered with discretion and fidelity it will constitute, in a short period, and judging of the future by the past, a rich and productive endow-

ment. It gives me pleasure to bear thus my individual testimony in favor of the bold projector of this peculiar, but most useful improvement upon the general plan.* (See Art. 10, Secs. 3 and 4, Cons. of Michigan.)

But, dwelling no longer upon these details, it is appropriate to remark, that the whole subject of common schools, and the diffusion of useful knowledge among men, seems recently to have engrossed in a very great degree the public attention. Men of a high order of talents among us, have made it the subject of much philosophical research, and loudly proclaimed its importance. Patriots, too, who discover in "the *signs of the times*" harbingers of evil omen, are looking with intense interest to the influences, *remote* perhaps, but in their view certain, which this system of common schools is exerting, as their last, but sure ground of hope for the preservation, *in its purity*, of our free and popular Government. Nor is the pride of ancient Europe offended at the thoughts of borrowing from the New World a system which has worked so well here! It is in full and successful operation, especially in the northern parts of Germany. And common schools, and other means "of diffusing useful knowledge among men," have been the topics of the most philosophical and eloquent disquisitions of the British press! All this is as it should be. But the wonder is, that an operative principle, so prolific of results and of so priceless value, should have remained so long unnoticed and unknown, except within the limited region of its direct and benig-

* Edward D. Ellis, Esq., then of Monroe, was a member of the Convention, and when this subject was under discussion, and on the spur of the occasion, he proposed this method of obtaining the requisite means for establishing and maintaining the Township Libraries.

nant influences! It is no centennial plant that bestows its product and displays its splendid beauties to the sun but *once* only in a hundred years. It is rather some active and perennial power, and as all may see, of *instant, continued,* and *unceasing fruitfulness!* A power which, pervading the masses of society, seeks indiscriminately the recipients of its bounty in the *humble* walks of life, and among the indigent as well as the opulent; which teaches to all alike the great moral and social duties of man! A power which sends its genial influences, in *equal measure,* to the heart and to the understanding of the poor and of the wealthy, and gives form, and strength, and expansion to the moral and to the intellectual faculties of *all* those who, in due succession, *must* participate, more or less largely, in the administration of their common Government, and into whose custody, for the time being, the destinies of this beautiful country of ours *must* be committed!

And this system, so simple in its design, so beneficent in its purposes and in its effects, so perfectly harmonizing with all the free institutions of our country, was the work, gentlemen, of our "Puritan" ancestors! Neither the military schools for the magnates of the Empire of Cyrus, nor the Gymnasia of ancient Greece, nor the philosophic disquisitions of Locke nor of Milton, nor even the wild dreaming of Jean Jacques Rousseau, could furnish its prototype. It was an original conception in the minds of our "Puritan" fathers. It was interwoven in the very texture of their Governments. It was indigenous alone to the soil of New England! Pardon me, gentlemen, for detaining you so long on a topic so common-place—perhaps, so trite. I have sought to press upon your remembrance the pregnant

facts I have asserted, lest at any time it should be forgotten that this priceless jewel was an emanation from the "Plymouth Rock!"

Colonel Benton sometimes, pleasantly enough, charges his brothers of the Senate with "stealing his thunder!" But "let honor be rendered to whom honor is due." Let no man rob from the dead! Let no man wrest from the brow of *our* ancestry, "Puritans" though they were, the honor of devising a plan which, of itself, should have secured to their memory a high place among the most distinguished of the benefactors of mankind.

It has long ago been said of our fathers, gentlemen, not only that "they were a church-going people," but also, that they were "a law-abiding people!" Both propositions, and greatly to their honor, are abundantly true. No people on earth were ever more scrupulously exact in conforming themselves in all things to the *letter of the law*, than they were: and none more obedient, in all things lawful, to the orders of those in authority! And this for the very sound and natural reason, that they were themselves, always, *the makers of the law;* and those in authority derived all their powers from the same source —the aggregate will of all. I have endeavored, gentlemen, at least on *this* occasion, to bring myself within the spirit of the latter of these admirable characteristics. The constituted authorities of your Society have signified to me, that it is their pleasure that I should read before you a written address. I am a son of New England. How could I oppose myself to an order emanating from *such* a source? I could not: and hence it is, that I undertook to group together such comments upon the history, the character, and the institutions of our "Pilgrim Fathers," as might seem appropriate to the

occasion. Especially, it was my desire to vindicate the character and the motives of our ancestors; and exhibit a slight but a symmetrical view of their principal institutions, political as well as social: to follow them over the broad country into which they have been transplanted, to trace their prospective influences upon the character and condition of their posterity; or, at all events, to indicate, so far as I might be enabled to do so, such topics, and such a course of investigation, as might seem entirely worthy of your further and more deliberate individual researches. But as I approach the labor, it increases and expands before me! Subjects, all worthy of careful analysis, and of the most earnest consideration, multiply almost without end. And now, that I have barely "penetrated through the bark" of this complicated and fruitful theme, I find it necessary to close, having already occupied as much of your indulgent attention as the proprieties of the occasion seem to permit.

A review of these topics—especially of their canons of descent, their abolition of the law of primogeniture, and the consequent more equal distribution, among all the citizens, of the landed estate of the country; the political sub-division of the State into townships; the establishment in each of a government for all local purposes, purely domocratic, and which, as a preparatory school, fits all alike for the proper performance of the higher duties of government, might each furnish the subject of a treatise; a glance at these, and at the wonderful harmony which they exhibit, and their admirable fitness for the exercise and the enjoyment of the high privileges of a free, well-regulated, and a well-balanced Government, must be reserved for some future occasion, and probably for some more able expositor. Commending

all these topics, gentlemen, to your future and earnest attention, and thanking you for your indulgent attention, I will no longer impose myself upon your exhausted patience.

AN ADDRESS

Before the Detroit Young Mens' Society.

DELIVERED BY REQUEST, APRIL, 1848.

GENTLEMEN OF THE "DETROIT YOUNG MENS' SOCIETY:"

It has been matter of conjecture, among antiquaries and speculative politicians, whether it did not enter into the design of the first settlers of New England, to found there a separate, an independent commonwealth? And whether those bold and fearless spirits did not look forward to precisely such an epoch as occurred in 1776, some one hundred and fifty years after.

I have seen it somewhere asserted, that among the secret archives of the government of Great Britain, there *are* proofs, a series of concurrent proofs, that from the earliest periods of those colonial establishments, there existed such a design, positive or contingent; and that until its final consummation, it was never entirely lost sight of by leading men of the colony.

I pretend not to affirm this proposition, nor to deny it; but I think it may be demonstrated that, whether such a contingency, or final result, were originally contemplated or not, the habits of that people fitted them

for it, and all their primitive institutions tended that way. Although the forms and the essential qualities of any government cannot fail to exercise a powerful influence in moulding the manners, customs and *general cast of sentiment* of those who owe allegiance to it; yet it is not less true, that the peculiar genius of a people still more powerfully controls the character and *essential qualities* of their government. The history of every age, and of every country, demonstrates the important truth, that the habits and modes of thinking and acting of any people, in the various domestic, social and political relations of life, *overrule* and give character to all their positive laws; while their fundamental institutions, re-acting, especially upon the generation which is advancing, give distinctness, and tone, and fashion, for succeeding ages, to their moral and political characters. Thus acting, and re-acting, each upon the other, these great moral agents secure consistency, harmony, and permanence to the condition of society.

The first settlers of New England were a *peculiar* people. Their characters were formed in the country they left, and by the times in which they lived. It was a school of adversity and of fearful oppression, both political and religious. There was passing before them there, between the genius of British liberty on the one side, and the votaries of despotism on the other, a *death struggle* of fearful foreboding! At no time since the Christian era, has such a struggle been more severe, nor the actors in the contest more distinctly, more clearly marked than in England, during the period which immediately followed and preceded the departure of the Pilgrims.

In the published address which I was requested by

the New England Society of Detroit not long ago to prepare, I adverted, sufficiently in detail in this respect, to the condition of the country the Pilgrims had left. Of their personal character, too, and that of some of the most distinguished among their associates, I had something to say. I was proceeding to notice consecutively the most prominent of their peculiar institutions; but these topics seemed to multiply, and the subject grew upon me as I advanced. I had *not allowed myself time to be short,* and after making some progress in the discussion which I had prescribed for myself, I became admonished by the proprieties of the occasion that I must break off, however abruptly. It is not my purpose to repeat what I then said. But the vein of thought which that occasion induced, led to views I did not then present, and to some of these I propose now to advert; though I fear you may consider them suited rather to engage the attention of the sons of New England, than yours. Candor indeed may render it proper for me to say, that motives of personal convenience may have influenced my selection on this occasion of such a theme. I do not expect again to address the New England Society of Detroit. But having been led, in the manner I have stated, to review my recollections of the men, and the institutions of New England, a course of research suggested itself which I have thought might be profitably pursued by all, of whatsoever lineage, who as American citizens claim part in the heritage of our Fathers. Those who participate in public affairs, as all American citizens according to their convenience and opportunity ought to do—those who like you, gentlemen, may expect to take an active part in regulating the policy, and in shaping the future destinies of our young

and vigorous commonwealth, will find it interesting surely, and most highly useful to seek, in the institutions and through the history of the past, for those primary and extraordinary causes, which, in the providence of God, have led our favored country from the helplessness of childhood, so suddenly, into all the fullness and vigor of *perfected* maturity; which have brought freedom, and security, and happiness into our social and domestic circles, and crowned our nation with all that wealth and prosperity and renown, can confer!

You will not, then, deem it out of place I hope, nor in the slightest degree disrespectful, that I should ask you to consider with me, of the influences which the habits and the institutions of the early colonists of New England may have exerted upon the character of the government and the existing establishments of the country. To touch, and that but slightly, upon some of the most prominent of these prolific topics, is all I shall now venture upon. The subject is too large and too multifarious, to be comprised in a brief and ephemeral production such as this. But if I can awaken a spirit of philosophic inquiry into these matters; if I can persuade any one of you, gentlemen, to trace the long series of consequences which have resulted from those original institutions and habits—institutions and habits which without much consideration, we are quite apt, in these, the days of our prosperity, to deride and laugh at—I feel that I have done some good.

The most conspicuous of all those characteristics which distinguished the original founders of New England, was that deeply seated religious feeling which pervaded *all* their institutions; which infused its spirit into *all* they did; which gave complexion to *all* their habits.

There could be no better pledge of the favor of Providence; no surer guarantee of their prosperity as a people, in all future time. But I forbear from all prolonged comments upon this most fertile branch of the general subject. In the public address to which I have alluded, I expressed my thoughts upon it sufficiently at large. A few remarks only in addition to those I then made, will comprise all to which I would now desire your indulgent attention.

A little reflection will admonish us, gentlemen, that there is great affinity, and a very intimate connection between civil and religious freedom. The one can hardly exist and be enjoyed *amply*, without the other. Both were dear to the "Puritans" of Great Britain; and both were denied to them by the reigning monarch. Freedom of opinion, the liberty to worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences, more especially, they clung to with the devotedness of martyrs! In the assertion of this liberty, they were prepared to meet *all* hazards; to incur *all* hardships; to *endure* all things; to *suffer* all things. The hierarchy of Great Britain they had repudiated. All obedience to the Bench of Bishops they had spurned and renounced! They were of that sect of Protestant Christians called "Congregationalists," whose creed acknowledged no *prelacy*; no high order of dignitaries in the church; and whose forms of government were all based upon equality of privilege and of right, among all the members of the society, whether *communicants* or not.

In the location and in the building of their churches, for example; in the selection, employment, and dismission of their pastors, in fixing their salaries, in all the temporal and prudential affairs of their society, all had

an equal voice. In short, their church government, in all its principles, in all its tendencies, and in all the habits of thinking and acting, which it superinduced, was purely Republican! And what is more natural, more congruous; and what, may I ask, was more *unavoidable*, than that a people, brought up all their lives to be familiar with the workings of *such* a system, in which, when of proper age, all participated; should apply *that* system, when they *could* so apply it, to their civil government? Now, I would not advance the absurd proposition, that none but congregationalists can, in modern times, be republicans. Such a proposition would be both arrogant and historically untrue. Whatever may be said of the *despotic* tendencies of the creed and the government of one church; or of the *oligarchical* character of the doctrines and the observances of another; or of the adverse influences of *any* in this regard; all these may be encountered and overcome, as, during the revolutionary war they *were* encountered and overcome by intelligence, energy of purpose, and manly patriotism. It is proverbially said, you know, that "man is a creature of habit." This is true, intellectually and morally, as well as physically. The greater therefore, is our responsibility; and the more imperative is our duty, as free moral agents, that we should suffer *no* habits to steal upon us except such as, in their influences, are good. But what I mean to say, is this, that having deliberately chosen, for the government of the temporal affairs of the church, a system unqualifiedly *republican* and *free* in its character; and being *educated* and brought up under its operations, their predispositions, habits, *all* their propensities *must* have led them, irresistibly, to adopt the same system of free re-

publican government for the regulation of their civil and political affairs.

A distinguished Representative in Congress is reputed to have advanced in debate, the bold proposition, that "it was *education* that made so many Whigs in the United States." If to "education" he would add "and honesty of purpose," *I* should not quarrel with the proposition. But however that may be, I hold myself quite safe in the assertion, that a genuine, old-fashioned congregationalist, of the "Puritan" school, *must* necessarily, in habit and in principle, have been a republican!

"Virtue," it is said, "is the *spirit* of republican government." This is doubtless very true; and so far as *human* legislation can avail, the religious establishments of these early adventurers encouraged and secured it. But it is equally true I apprehend, that to virtue you must add *knowledge;* or the system must fall! Government is a *science.* It requires study, enlightened judgment, close observation, and an habitual and practical knowledge of its operations and principles.

When, many years ago, the Walk-in-the-Water first made its appearance at our wharves, it produced, as you may well suppose, quite a sensation, especially among those who had never seen or heard of a steamboat before. The advent of so extraordinary a monster was soon bruited about. Among the multitudes who gathered from far and near to look at it, there was a native Canadian, a little above middle age. He was an amiable, an intelligent, and a highly respected citizen. But he had never heard of a steamboat before. Being advised of its arrival and wonderful performance, he had set out on the instant, fearing it would leave the city

before he could see it; and travelling some thirty miles or more, principally in the night-time, he reached here about daylight. More bold than the rest, and early as it was, he ventured on board. He was politely received, remained a long time on board, and was shown every thing. But he could speak no English. Verbal explanations, therefore, were of no avail.

Very early in the same morning, and long before my ordinary time of rising, I was startled by a violent and continued knocking at my door. Dressing myself very hastily, I went to see what terrible thing had happened. It was my old and polite acquaintance, Mons. Tremble, living somewhere about the mouth of Huron, now "Clinton" river. Scarcely allowing himself time for courteous salutation which Frenchmen, (God bless them!) *never forget;* and in a condition of undisguised agitation, he brust into an exclamation that "the world was coming to an end!" I *thought* he spoke distinctly; I *thought*. I heard him clearly; but I could not comprehend him! "Plait il, Monsieur?" I said to him; and he repeated his affirmation—"Voila la fin du monde," he said, "que s'approache; et bien tot tout sera detruit!" He was not drunk, I thought; he did not appear like a crazy man. I could not believe that *I* was either the one or the other; and feeling that it was my turn to be astonished, I again asked him what he said? what he meant? A third time he repeated his assertion, but in conclusion he went on to remark, that "Now you and I see vessels driven with violence by *fire* through the water. Soon they will be hurled through the air also by fire. You and I may probably both live to see these things; and then all things will melt with fervent heat, and the world will be burnt up! The priests told him so—the

Holy Bible says it!" The mystery was solved, he had seen the steamboat!

Now take away the engineers from either of the magnificent steamers at your wharves, and place this amiable, excellent, and virtuous man as he then was, in control of its machinery, and who of you, gentlemen, would trust your persons or your property on board that steamer in her next voyage to Buffalo? Or, and it would be a proposition scarcely more absurd, will you set a South Sea Islander, who never heard a word of Greek, to translate one of the books of the Odyssey? or will you take a wild Mexican, honest and true, and pious withal, (if you can *catch* such a one!) and place in his charge the complicated machinery of one of your departments of government in Washington? and what a lovely *kettle of fish* he would make of it! No, gentlemen, it is vain and idle to hope that *any* set of people can long carry on a free republican government without knowledge too as well as virtue! And this, if we may judge by their works, the founders of New England seem *practically* to have understood. Their system of education—their plan for the diffusion of knowledge among all grades and ranks and classes in society, was beautiful, unprecedented, unique. There was nothing like it in any age nor country! The nearest approximation to it may be found in the system about the same time, or soon after adopted in Scotland. But that applied only to the higher classes; it was brought home only to the children of *land proprietors*, and those, as you know, in *feudal times* constituted but a small portion of the entire population.

The New Englanders divided their country into small school districts, in every one of which, under adequate

pecuniary penalties, a *free school* was required to be kept and funds were provided for it. In every county town, a grammar school was required also to be kept, at which the learned languages and the higher branches of science were required to be taught. I care not under what pretences, real or delusive, this system was *forced* upon the country. The Yankees sometimes gave queer reasons for what they did. So do others, sometimes. Lord Coke was always scrupulously exact, you know, gentlemen, to find *some* reason for every proposition he advanced, and the reason he gives us why a father may not inherit from his son, why the land of the son, upon his demise, does not accrue to the father, is a little *queer* also—it is "*quia ponderosum est!*"

The Pilgrim Fathers seem to have felt themselves under some stringent necessity to give *their* reasons for the establishment of schools and colleges. One of their early acts of legislation on this subject, passed nearly two hundred years ago, may furnish a specimen. It contains a summary of them by way of preamble, in the following terms: "It being one chief object of Satan," they say, "to keep men from the knowledge of the scriptures, as in *former* times, keeping them in an unknown tongue; so in these latter times, by persuading them from the *use* of tongues, so that at least the true sense and meaning of the original might be clouded by the false glosses of saint-seeming deceivers, and that learning might not be buried in the graves of our forefathers, in church and colony, the Lord assisting our endeavors. It is therefore ordered," etc., "that every township within this jurisdiction, after the Lord hath increased them to the number of fifty householders, shall then forthwith appoint one within the town, to teach all such children,"

etc.; "and it is further ordered, that in every county town there shall be set up and kept a grammar school, for the use of the county, the master thereof being able to instruct youths, so far as they may be fitted for college," etc.

I will not, however, detain you by further comment upon this most striking feature in the institutions and history of the primitive founders of New England. I enlarged upon it quite sufficiently, and I feared *ad nauseam*, the other day. I introduce it now not with reference to its intrinsic merits, to its harmony of adaptation, or to its great moral beauty—*these* will stand the admiration of future generations! Time, under whose rude touch most things human grow dark, and wither, and disappear, will but bring into bolder relief those excellencies, and polish and brighten them with a more glowing and radiant lustre! But I have now asked your attention to this peculiar institution because of the ulterior, the remote, the permanent and widespread influences, which, through succeeding generations, it seems destined to exert upon the moral and intellectual character of our whole country—and more especially upon the principles and character of its political establishments and government.

If it be true, as I have assumed, that for the successful administration of a republican government, a general diffusion of knowledge is quite as indispensable as virtue and morality, then its results that to this system only, or some adequate substitute for it, the American people must look for *any* good ground of hope, that our existing free and republican government, can long, in its original purity and simplicity, be successfully administered. We cannot pierce through the dark mists

which conceal the future. But in *this* regard, at least, the indications are auspicious. The desire of extending this system of education and admirably contrived plan of diffusing knowledge among all classes of men, has, with the American people, become a *passion!* It has been fully transplanted, you know, into the broad valleys of the teeming West; and it comes, the harbinger and hand-maid of self-government! Long chilled by indifference, and *frowned* upon as a worthless *Yankee notion,* it pined and languished; but Yankee perseverance has prevailed. The system is now fully installed in public favor throughout the West, and unborn *millions* will yet live to bless, in the fullness of their hearts, as well the inventors of the scheme, as the hands that planted it among them! But in whatsoever degree it may win its way to the public favor in other States, new or old, (and in *all* strenuous efforts are now making to introduce and foster it,) neither this nor their religious institutions can be separated from the affections and the policy of the New England States, unless, indeed, in some great convulsion, all the elements of society there shall be shaken from their places, scattered and destroyed. They constitute the very foundation, as immovable, and as firm as the *rock of Plymouth,* upon which *all* their State Governments, and every other institution among them, domestic, social, or political, are based.

These sagacious men did not stop even here; they in no wise left their work so unfinished. We shall see how, further, they sought to give consistency, compactness, and finish to their plan. It will have been noticed, that at an early period, the country occupied

by them was subdivided into societies, or parishes, with a view to religious purposes; and into districts, with reference to purposes of education. Within each, under the sanctions and provisions of the general law, their ordinary affairs, fiscal and economical, were respectively conducted; the requisite police was duly enforced in them; they constituted parts of the political machinery of government.

They created also other organic political bodies of a very peculiar character. The whole country was divided into corporations, all bounded locally by territorial limits, with numerous and extensive political powers. Their plan of township government, so far as I have been able to discover, was original, and truly *sui generis*. Alfred, the best and wisest of the Saxon monarchs, subdivided his Kingdom of England into hundreds, tytheings and counties. This was to secure a more perfect subordination; it was for the better government of the Kingdom. It brought home to each individual, doubtless, more security; but it yet fastened upon each a direct individual responsibility, and that without adding materially to the privileges of the subject, or increasing his political powers. The incorporation of boroughs, some centuries afterwards, though it might have suggested the thought, in no wise constituted a model for the New England system. Though greatly promotive of the popular cause wherever such privileges were conveyed, yet those charters were but seldom granted, and then only to subserve some local or specific purpose. They were isolated cases, and not parts of any general and harmonious system. But to whatsoever source this New England plan may be traced, its adoption has certainly exerted a most powerful and decisive influ-

ence upon the political character and habits of the people over whom it has been extended.

Upon these corporate political bodies, collectively, covering the *whole State*, each acting within its own defined township limits, was usually conferred almost the whole power of regulating and controlling the municipal concerns and the internal police of the country. They ascertained and directed the amount of money which it might be deemed necessary to be raised by taxation for the support of the poor, for the construction and repair of highways and bridges, and all the various purposes which might be necessary within the township; and they supervised its disbursement. They were ordinarily vested with the power of granting licenses for taverns, ferries, etc., and appointed the various officers whose functions were to be exercised within the township limits, seeing to their proper qualification, etc., and they exercised generally a controlling and supervisory power over all the public interests within their respective jurisdictions.

By the general law of the State, the citizens of each township are required to meet periodically in "general town meeting," at certain fixed periods, at some central and convenient place, to be by them designated, and as much oftener as the public business may require, and so met "in legal town meeting," they are duly organized: a presiding officer and a competent number of clerks are appointed, possessing all the powers deemed requisite in the best organized deliberative assemblies. At these "legal township meetings," the old and the young attend, and according to the original plan of the "Pilgrim Fathers," *all* the admitted freemen of the township, being over twenty-one years old, and without other qualifica-

tions, are made competent to participate in all discussions and debates, and to vote on all questions and in all elections. In short, every township constitutes a pure and simple democracy, where all the people, in their political and sovereign capacity, personally, and without representation, meet together to discuss, deliberate, and to act on all the various public affairs which may be before them. They determine, each having an equal voice, "*what* shall be done, *how* it shall be done, and *who* shall do it." And I can conceive of no possible device or contrivance so admirably calculated to familiarize all men with the public business of the country—to accustom the young and the old to the *forms* of deliberative assemblies—to fit them all, according to their respective talents, for legislators, and indeed for all the higher grades of public life.

I can well remember the event of the first introduction of that system into that which is Ohio now. I think it was about two years before Ohio became a State. I was too young then to participate at all in public affairs, or very fully to understand them. But *this* event I the more distinctly recollect, principally, perhaps because of the deep interest *all the Yankees* then in that country exhibited in the matter. The occasion was indeed considered, and very justly too, as a great triumph. The emigrants from New England constituted at that time perhaps a third part of the whole population. These were located principally at or near the mouth of the Muskingum, and in the Connecticut Western Reserve, with some few who had joined the emigrants from New Jersey, at and near Cincinnati. The central parts of the State, so far as settled at all, were occupied by emigrants from Maryland, Virginia and Kentucky; and

the eastern section of it, by citizens principally from the Keystone State. The habits and character of the emigrants from New Jersey, disposed them more to assimilate with the people of New England, and it was principally through their aid, it is believed, that this favorite measure was carried. All others were violently and strongly prejudiced against the policy of it, and sought only to render it ridiculous and hateful.

During a few years they utterly disregarded the law, or took no other notice of it, than to hold it up, and the whole system of township government, to the public derision, and as the proper subject of contemptuous burlesque. But, "a change came o'er the spirit of their dream!" and at the end of some ten or fifteen years, the mass of the people, even of those who had most derided it, would sooner I think have parted, and would *now* I think, sooner part with any other of their local institutions, than with that one. The outlines of this political contrivance have found place among the political establishments of Michigan. The plan was but little favored by some of those in whose keeping, during the continuance of our colonial government, were placed the destinies of the nascent State; yet the germ of it was planted there. Its elements are with us. Let us fortify, enlarge, and embellish the system. Let us make it, gentlemen, what it was originally designed to be, the *monitor* and the *friend* of self-government—a school for young statesmen—at once the birth-place, the nurse, and the *home* of the free!

There is another topic, gentlemen, to which I desire briefly to invite your attention. It relates to the extent and diffuseness in which the proprietary interests in the soil may have been distributed among the original

settlers of New England, and to the laws defining the tenure and the principal incidents of real estate among them. The political character of a government may be judged of with no small degree of accuracy, from a review in these respects of the landed property within it, and the laws by which that interest is regulated. Nor will that actual condition of the real estate of any country fail, with re-acting power, most materially to influence prospectively the political character and principles of the Government. Where the proprietary interest in land is diffused, in comparatively small portions and generally throughout the masses of the population, and especially if the policy of the law tend to a continued and a still more general diffusion of it, the government itself can hardly fail to partake more or less extensively of a democratic character.

In *this view*, it is not immaterial to inquire into the policy pursued in these respects by the early colonists of New England. As regards the manner of dividing the land in the first instance, among the original settlers, and the degree of equality which may have been observed in its partition, I am not sufficiently informed to enable me to speak advisedly. It is not, perhaps, unreasonable to suppose that different regulations may have obtained in different settlements, and at different times. The title to the country was generally acquired by large and aggregate companies, and by them from time to time, allotted among themselves and to *all* actual settlers. In the distributions made, a regard was always had, I believe, to a reasonable degree of equality; certain, at least it is, that no part of New England was disfigured by large manorial establishments, such as might be found in many of the other

European colonies. On the contrary, *all* there were land holders, and to a very great extent, in nearly equal portions.

Next after those I have already noticed, and in perfect harmony with them, the most important feature, especially in reference to its indirect and ulterior influences in the policy of New Englanders, consisted in the simplicity and decided character of their land laws. On reaching their place of refuge, the wild country of their adoption, the "Puritan" colonists left behind them, they discarded entirely all vestiges of the *Feudal system*. The *allodium*, the whole proprietary interest in the land vested in the grantee, and *not* the *fee* merely. It was made freely alienable deed, or by devise, and was subject to be taken for debt upon execution; but if not so disposed of, and saving to the surviving widow her reasonable share, it descended, upon the death of the ancestor, to *all* the children. Thus repudiating entirely the feudal preferences of the male over the female heirs, and substituting for the *exclusiveness* of the right of primogeniture, a double portion to the eldest son, the whole of the real estate of which the ancestor died seized was required to be divided *equally* among all. Nor did this qualification in favor of the eldest son long continue. Soon after, the estate was made to descend to all the children, share and share alike.

This bold encroachment upon the fundamental law of the mother-country, prevented forever the growth among them of a *landed aristocracy*, and gave, of necessary consequence, a decided democratic cast of character to all the governments which grew up among the sons of the "Pilgrims." The causes which led to this wide deviation from the English canons of descent, have been the

subject of various conjectures. In one of the large counties of England, a local custom has prevailed since before the Norman conquest, called "the custom of Gavelkind in Kent," by which *real* property of which the ancestor died seized descends, in the event of there being no will, in like manner to *all* the children in equal proportions. Many of the first colonists of New England, especially those who settled in Connecticut, migrated from that county. It has been conjectured, therefore, with much plausibility, that this feature in their law may have been brought with them. Others again have supposed, and for reasons not less cogent, that the principle was borrowed from the Judaic code.

In the frame of government adopted by the Pilgrim Fathers, and in the scope of the policy they pursued, the genius of the great law giver of the Jews, would seem strikingly apparent. Of the direct interposition of the Deity in behalf of the favored descendants of Abraham, it is not my design to speak. It would illy become me to do so. "I would not ascribe too much to Moses, nor too little to the Divine source of his wisdom." But I do not think it irreverent to assume, that *human* action may be stimulated by human motive; and in cases, too, where the end attained, is precisely that which Divine wisdom, through the unconscious agency of man, should have predetermined to effect. In this spirit, I desire to glance at some of the prominent features of the Judaic policy and history; we may then the more safely judge how far the code of the "Pilgrim Fathers," may have been borrowed from that source. I assume then, that the motive, the proximate motive at least, which influenced the Israelites to depart from the home of their birth, was the rank oppression to

which they were subjected there. I assume, that their purpose was to establish a government of their own, in a far distant land; where they might worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences, and at the same time enjoy all that political freedom which is so conducive to the dignity and happiness of man. I assume, that the constitution of government prepared for them, by the wisdom of their great law-giver, was essentially republican, in all its leading features, and that it assumed the *welfare* of the *whole* community as the *end* of its establishment. It annihilated utterly, all artificial and tyrannical distinction of castes and established political equality as the fundamental principle of the State. It was a constitution founded on a religious basis, and assumed that a general diffusion of knowledge, as well as piety towards God, was necessary to its successful administration. It assigned, therefore, to the least numerous of the tribes, (that of Levi,) the special duty of inculcating both; for the functions *they* performed, and for which their superior education peculiarly fitted them, were both civil and religious.

Each of the other tribes, though *all* for *national* purposes were as closely bound together as similarity of habits, manners, and character, and the sympathies of a common religion could bind them, governed nevertheless, its own affairs in its own way, and as a separate republic. The hereditary head of the tribe constituted its chief executive officer. The heads of the different families, together with other distinguished men, probably constituted the Provincial Assemblies, and delegates appointed by these, probably constituted the national Senate, the great Sanhedrim of the Jews. But notwithstanding this liberal distribution of power to

their provincial and to their national assemblies, the specific ratification of all great and public decrees, by the general voice of the people, seems invariably to have been demanded. The children of Israel were all free; and excepting this limited but acknowledged subordination to the heads of their families and of their tribes, entirely equal.

When, at length, they chose to desist, prematurely, and against the injunctions of their great law-giver, from completing their conquest of the promised land, by the *total* expulsion of their depraved and ferocious enemies, they made preparation for the partition among themselves of that which they had reduced to possession. Prior to that final act, they were once more to pass upon their constitution of government, their *fundamental* law. The whole people were accordingly gathered together, upon Mount Abal and upon Mount Gerizim. Their constitution and law, being connectedly read to them, paragraph by paragraph, it was assented to with *one* voice, by acclamation; and under circumstances of the most impressive and extraordinary solemnity. They then proceeded to make partition of the conquered country, according to the requisitions of that fundamental law. The whole people had again been numbered, and the division was made according to population. First, different regions of country were set off, to the respective tribes, by the nation collectively, in order that the individual allotments to those of the same tribe might be together. The subdivision into these *individual allotments*, would seem, then, to have been consummated by the respective tribes; and to each individual as nearly as may be, it was assigned, share and share alike. The tribe of Levi was ex-

cluded from this division. But in lieu of their equal share, being teachers and ministers of religion, and having other duties to perform, certain tythes were granted to them and certain walled cities conveniently located, were assigned to them for their residence.

The effect of this equal distribution among all, was an extraordinary equality of condition throughout the entire mass of the people. But to perpetuate that equality of condition as far as should comport with the prosperity of the whole, it was provided that the land of a deceased ancestor should be distributed in equal portions to all his sons, except that for a reason *not very apparent, a double portion should be assigned to the eldest son.* And to render such equality of condition more certain and continuous, it was further provided, that upon the occurring of every fiftieth year, all intervening alienations and transfers of land should become inoperative, and that the whole mass of the real estate of the country should *revert* to the heirs of the respective original owners. All conveyances and transfers being made with *reference to this* peremptory requisition of their fundamental law, it is manifest that it could give no occasion to charges of individual wrong nor injustice. We hear of the agrarian laws of ancient times. We hear of agrarian projects in modern times; but all the wisdom of ancient Rome, and all the speculations of modern utopians, in point of *efficiency*, fall immeasurably behind the Judaic law of property, in this regard; and it would seem almost impossible to devise a scheme, which, without convulsing the very foundations of society, *must* operate so effectually and forever, to prevent the growing up of a powerful, oppressive, and permanent aristocracy.

Thus, gentlemen, I have endeavored to sketch briefly some of the leading principles of the Judaic law. Such digression from the main purpose of this address could hardly be excused, perhaps, but for the data which may be thus obtained by which the better to judge how far the institutions of the founders of New England were borrowed from that code, and the character of the institutions themselves; and but for the sneers and ridicule so often sought to be cast upon their memory, because of their *alleged* desire to adopt the institutions and the character of the Jews as a model by which to fashion their own. It has been said of some of these colonists, and not without design to cast ridicule upon them, that in the adjustment of their organic law, they have formally ordained—"That the word of God shall be the only rule to be attended unto, in ordering the affairs of government in the plantation." Of other colonists it has been said, that when assembled in character of sovereign legislators, they have with much solemnity resolved "That the laws of Moses shall constitute their rule of decision, *until they can find a better!*"

Imputations of this sort are not unfrequent, and are usually coupled with something, either in language or thought, quite well calculated to cast an air of ridicule upon their proceedings and their character. So far as they may have rendered themselves *justly* obnoxious to ridicule in this respect, let it rest upon their own memory. But that there is much in the Jewish institutions, independent of their divine sanction, worthy of imitation, none will feel disposed to deny. That they contain provisions and enforce principles of extraordinary wisdom, exclusive of their wonderful adaptation to the people and to the times for which they were designed,

few will be inclined to question. To what extent any of these were successfully or wisely imitated by the Pilgrim Fathers; what analogies may exist, or what points of resemblance may be traced between the institutions of the people, I leave to others curious in such things to explore. My purpose is answered by calling your attention to the subject, as one worthy of future and philosophical research.

There is another aspect, the one to which in the outset I alluded, in which this precise topic will be found worthy to arrest our further scrutiny. Some three or four years after the first colony of Connecticut was established, (and I speak of Connecticut because I am more familiar with her history, not doubting but that her history illustrates in the matters to which I advert, the prevailing opinions and general sentiment of all the New England colonies,) some three or four years after the first *permanent* settlement of that State, (in 1635,) all the freemen of the State, then confined to the several districts of Hartford, Windsor, and Wethersfield, met together personally, in one great convention, and for the sole purpose of forming for themselves a system of government—a *constitution*. It was so formed. Their first charter, obtained some fifty years afterwards, was but little else than a transcript of it, and fully affirmed all its leading principles.

In the preamble of that constitution, the people declare themselves "one public state or commonwealth." In one of its many well digested articles, they declare "that the supreme power of the commonwealth shall remain in the General Assembly, and that *they only* shall have the power to *make laws or repeal them*." After providing for magistrates and courts, and defining and

regulating the judicial power, they declare, in another article, that they, (the said magistrates and courts,) "shall have power to administer justice according to the laws *here*" (in the General Assembly) "*established, and for want thereof, according to the rule of the word of God.*" Whether by this form of expression, reference is intended to be made to the *Mosaic* law, or rather to those rules and principles of natural justice and equity which pervade the New as well as the Old Testament, it is not my purpose here to inquire. But the point to which I would ask your attention, consists in the *direct* and *emphatic* exclusion which the instrument contains of the *law-making power of the mother-country.* Even the common law—*proprio vigore*—was never in force there.

This constitution, (which for extraordinary ability, sound judgment and wisdom, in reference to the principles which it affirms, and the detail of its provisions, may well compare with any of the most approved and elaborated systems of organic law of modern times,) continued down to a very late period, and for nearly two centuries, to constitute essentially the *fundamental* law of the State. And what is it, other than a solemn declaration, on the part of the people of Connecticut, that they *intended* to be a free people? The moral of all I have said to you, gentlemen, (and they are but *hints* which I have thrown out on this prolific subject,) is, that in order to fit *any* people for free institutions and for self-government, they must be a *virtuous* people, their minds must be shaped by habit and stored with knowledge. The story of the New England colonists, illustrates the truth of this proposition. Virtuous as they were, and educated as they were, *particularly* to understand and to transact *their own public affairs*, and

living, as they *did* live, under institutions such as theirs, the people of New England must have been, what they always claimed to be, *a free people!*

When Great Britain put forth her bold pretensions, and sought to burthen and oppress us—it was New England first—it was New England *always* that placed herself upon her defence, and *put back* the impertinent attempt. It was James Otis, a son of New England, and *not* Patrick Henry, who gave the first impulse to our glorious revolution! And I may be excused for saying that it has been matter of surprise, and of equal regret with me, that the American public are so little familiar with the life and character of that pure patriot and eminently great man. If the trial of John Hampden tended more than any other event, to rouse the dormant energies of the people of England; if the arguments employed in that celebrated trial tended more than all things else, to concentrate the public opinion and unite the body of the nation in its resistance to the tyranny of the House of Stuart; the discussions that grew out of the application made to the highest judicial tribunal of Massachusetts, by the officers of the Crown, to obtain its sanction to the issue and service, of what they were pleased to call "writs of assistance," were not less effective in rousing the spirit, and stimulating the innate love of freedom of the sons of Puritans. The case was tried at Boston, in February, 1761—it involved *all* the principles upon which the American revolution ultimately turned, all indeed that is valuable in the rights of private property and personal security. The arguments of Mr. Otis on that occasion, in favor of the public liberties, were looked upon every where through New England with the highest favor. They produced an en-

thusiasm of feeling which pervaded the continent, and which did not cease until the revolution was consummated.* As a statesman and the popular leader of the patriot party in the Provincial Legislature, Mr. Otis stood most distinguished and without a rival. His prescience and great search of thought, seemed equal to the brilliancy and power of his forensic and popular efforts.

In a communication to a distinguished personage in England, dated in 1768, he sums up his views on the condition of the colonies in these impressive and pro-

*The eloquent biographer of James Otis remarks in reference to this suit, that "no cause in the annals of colonial jurisprudence, had hitherto excited more public interest, and none had given rise to such powerful argument. When the profound learning of the advocate, the powers of wit, fancy, and pathos, with which he could copiously illustrate and adorn that learning; and the ardent character of his eloquence is considered; and above all, a deep foresight of the meditated oppression and tyranny that would be gratified by the success of this hateful application: When all these circumstances are recalled, the power and magnificence of this oration may be imagined. With a knowledge of the topics that were involved, and the fearless energy with which they were developed and elucidated; the time when it occurred, and the accompanying circumstances; every person will join with President Adams, when he says, I *do* say, in the most solemn manner, that Mr. Otis' oration against 'writs of assistance,' breathed into this nation the breath of life! The room was filled with all the officers of government and the principal citizens, to hear the arguments in a cause that inspired the deepest solicitude. The case was opened by Mr. Gridley, who argued it with much learning, ingenuity, and dignity; urging every point and authority that could be found, after the most diligent search, in favor of the custom-house petition; making all his reasoning depend on this consideration—'*if* the parliament of Great Britain is the sovereign legislator of the British Empire?' He was followed by Mr. Thatcher, on the opposite side, whose reasoning was ingenious and able, delivered in a tone of great mildness and moderation. But, in the language of President Adams, Otis *was a flame of fire!* With a promptitude of classical allusions, a depth of research, a rapid summary of historical events and dates, a profusion of legal authorities, a prophetic glance of his eyes into futurity, and a rapid torrent of impetuous eloquence, he hurried away *all* before him: *American Independence was then and there born!*" etc.

phetic words: "Our fathers were a *good* people; we *have been a free* people; *and if you will not let us remain so any longer, we shall be a great people!*" Mr. Otis was unquestionably one of the master-spirits of the age in which he lived; but his bold and successful career was destined to be prematurely and suddenly arrested. In 1769, he became the victim of a brutal and ferocious assault made upon him by some minions of the Crown, then officers in the British army. The wounds then inflicted upon him he never recovered from, and with broken health and impaired intellect, he was obliged to retire, in a great measure, from public life. But the principles he had advocated were not forgotten, nor the benefit of his example lost upon his countrymen. Nor indeed could they be; for the elements of political freedom had been planted too deeply in all their institutions; and the spirit of independence had pervaded all classes of society!

The last conversation to which I listened with lively interest, before I left the city of Washington, was a friendly discussion between certain Members of Congress, touching the respective claims of Rhode Island and Connecticut, as to which of the two States was entitled to the honor of *originating* the first *formal legislative Declaration of Independence.* It had been demonstrated, and was conceded, that *each* was prior in point of time, to that of the celebrated State paper which emanated from the old Continental Congress, on the Fourth of July, 1776. But it was a question, *which* of the two States I have named took that bold ground first. The act of the Connecticut Legislature was not accessible; and a Member of Congress from that State, promised, on his return home, to cause the public arch-

ives to be examined, with a view to ascertain its date. I have no knowledge of the result; but I am inclined to think that the honor belongs to Rhode Island. The act of the last mentioned State I had previously seen, and admired. It was passed by the Rhode Island Legislature, in May, 1776; some two months before the same decisive step was taken by Congress. It is to be found printed in a document of the 28th Congress, (before which body it had recently before been produced,) on 11th, and also on the 26th page of "No. 581.—1st Ses. 28th Cong., Ho. of Reps."

As an interesting historical relic, and as a proud testimonial of the courage, firmness, and devoted patriotism of the people of Rhode Island, I had, when it was first printed by Congress, transmitted the document containing it to you. But my admiration of it being much increased by its perusal, and a review of the imposing, fearful, and extraordinary circumstances under which this bold measure had been taken; and thinking that it might perhaps have escaped your particular observation, I marked the page and turned down a leaf, and sent to you a second copy of the same document. And I took some merit to myself, gentlemen, for thus pressing it upon you; for although it may have remained unnoticed among the mass of Congressional documents, which probably encumber your shelves, yet when you shall have made it the subject of close inspection and study, you will find it entirely worthy of all the praise which has been bestowed upon it, and upon the brave and noble spirits to whose firm, generous, and devoted patriotism we are indebted for taking so noble a stand. Although the document may exhibit something of the quaintness, in style of the *olden time*,

yet as a business paper, nothing could be more appropriate. I know of nothing superior to it. It contains nothing superfluous—nothing which ought not to be found there. It comprises all that should be in it; it covers the whole ground. With a becoming energy, terseness, and dignity, it speaks the sentiments of men who, with James Otis, would have announced to the mother-country, and to the world, that "Our fathers were a *good* people; we have been a *free* people; and if you will not let us remain so *any* longer, we *shall be a great people!*"

MARIETTA.

The seventieth anniversary of the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers of the West, was celebrated at Marietta, on the thirteenth of April, 1858. The attendance was large, the Hon. Thomas Ewing delivered the Oration, and the whole celebration passed off with great eclat. Among the invited "Pioneers" residing in various parts of the country at the time, who could not be present on the occasion, was Mr. Woodbridge; and by way of showing his affection for his old friends at Marietta, he forwarded to them the following interesting letter:

Fellow-Citizens of Marietta:—

It was my purpose to have met you personally on the occasion of this interesting anniversary. It has been within a few days only that I have felt myself compelled to relinquish that purpose. The relations which, many years ago, bound me so closely to this community, I desire not to forget. And I will not suppress the avowal, that it would have been exceedingly gratifying to me, if, in the renewed spirit of by-gone years, I could now have exhibited to you such a picture of your early history, combining with it my own personal recollection of events, as should be suitable to the occasion, and worthy of you. But "man proposes—God disposes!"

The ravages of disease, combined with the infirmities of increasing age, have rendered it improper and unsafe to attempt the journey which would be necessary to enable me to meet you. This, though *my* loss, perhaps, is *your* gain. For there are gentlemen among you more conversant with all the topics connected with the great event you are now assembled to commemorate, than I am, and who have clearer voices and sounder lungs. To them I must refer myself.

But there is one obligation I may redeem. It is, that I should tender to you my earnest and grateful acknowledgements for the kind, thoughtful, and generous invitation which your committee have been pleased to extend to me, and which authorized me to unite with you this day in commemorating the anniversary of your great State. And ought I not to feel a common interest with you in that great event? *This* is the country of my childhood, and of my middle life. It was the home of my revered father, and of my sainted mother. It was the dwelling place of beloved sisters, and of estimable brothers, one of whom has but recently departed from you; whom you all knew and esteemed, for his life was passed among you in acts of benevolence and Christian charity to the end. This was the home too of kind-hearted fellow-citizens, who first, a long time ago, took me by the hand, led me gently forward into public life, and upon whose favors I leaned for support, and to whose unshaken confidence I owe, in a great measure, what little of distinction I may have acquired as a public man. It will not, then, be deemed arrogant in me, I trust, that *I* too should claim a common interest in that great event which you have assembled here to celebrate. And what is that event? Why, seventy

years ago this day, there landed on this—the then verge of an interminable wilderness—a few bold and fearless spirits, who established here the broad foundations of your powerful State. Here in the very midst of the great war-path of the savages, red as it still was with the blood of the hapless victims of their cruel warfare, these men planted themselves, and laid deep the corner-stone of that great social and political edifice which now rears its gigantic and beautiful proportions high among the proudest of the sister States!

Let not the fact then be forgotten, or obscured, or lost sight of, that *here*—on *this* spot—the first Anglo-Saxon community in this broad land began; and that from this prolific germ, then and here planted, has sprung that wide-spread Christian civilization which now adorns and blesses the great North-West.

But *who* were they, who braving the terrors of Indian warfare, and rising superior to the privations, and hardships, and perils incident to a settlement in a far-off wilderness, had the rare courage, the *temerity*, to conceive, and to give effect to, so bold and *romantic* a plan?

I saw advertised, not long ago, a book entitled "The Romance of Western History." The title attracted my attention. It does not purport to contain a continuous history of the West; but is made up of detached sketches of particular events, of acts of individual courage, heroic valor, and of military prowess. The recital is not without interest; yet, I closed the book with a feeling of disappointment and pain; for, throughout the work, I could see *no allusion*—not the slightest—to that first great epoch in our history, which you have now met to commemorate. The main purpose of the work seemed to be, to eulogize Kentucky and the descend-

ants of Virginia and North Carolina. To all this, no exception could be justly taken, if that eulogy were not so glaringly *exclusive*. The Kentuckians (who will doubt it?) are generous, high-spirited, and bold. The Scotch-Irish, of North Carolina, were an honest, industrious, and brave people. The French Huguenots, who, after the cruel revocation of the "Edict of Nantz," found refuge there, were of a gallant race; and there were none more brave than the Cavaliers of Virginia. Let them be praised then; "let honor be rendered to whom honor is due." But was there no courage, no merit, no talent, no heroic valor, *elsewhere?* Were *all* the virtues which embellish and adorn the character of man, *concentrated* alone among the descendants of Virginia and North Carolina? George Washington, indeed, was peerless. As a domestic and as a public man, as a statesman and as a warrior, I need not attempt to describe him. Language has already been exhausted in attempts adequately to treat of his high character. His birth-place and his grave are in Virginia. Let her exult in that high honor. But let it be remembered that *his* aspirations were not confined to the limits of a single State. *His* home was the *Union*—that Union which, under Providence, *he* was mainly instrumental in creating. There was "no East and no West, no North and no South," for him. His affections were not limited to the narrow localities of his birth-place. He was equally at home in New England as at Mt. Vernon; and I feel that nothing is hazarded by the remark, that he was as much believed and confided in by the New Englanders, as by his compatriots of Virginia. But it is nevertheless a truth, that during the period of the Revolution, there was no deficiency of talent, anywhere

throughout the revolted colonies, nor of merit suited to the exigency, in every department of life; comprising *all* parts of our extended country, there existed in it a *constellation* of great men, such as the world never before had seen. It was the *crisis* that produced them. No. I should rather say it was in the providence of a merciful God that they were raised up and fitted for that great crisis. If they were found in Virginia, so also were they found among the descendants of the Puritans. New England .abounded in them. George Rogers Clark, whom the writer of the "Romance of Western History," delighted to praise, was a bold, intrepid, and fearless warrior; was not Ethan Allen as adroit, as energetic, and as fearless as *he* was?

Patrick Henry was an ardent advocate for freedom, full of talent and eloquence beyond most men. Was not James Otis his equal in all these attributes? Read his life and the history of his times, and you will not pronounce him the inferior of Henry. John Marshall was an eminently great and good man. For many years at the head of the Judiciary, he, more than any other Jurist, gave compactness, and practical harmony, and strength to our then untried constitution. (*He* made no "Dred Scot" decisions.) But, in the short period of his judicial life, did not Oliver Ellsworth disclose similar elements of intellectual power? Nor were the indications few or feeble, that equal eminence awaited him, if he had continued on the Bench. As an accomplished Jurist too, their contemporary, Theophilus H. Parsons, was I suppose the inferior of no man then living.

But I refrain from enumerating the multitude of distinguished men of that era. The attempt would be tedious, and out of place. Virginia exults, as she has a

right to do, in her Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison, and others of her distinguished citizens; but is the lineage of the Puritans to be repudiated? Are the Adamses to be forgotton? Are the Benjamin Franklins, and Fisher Ames, and Josiah Quincy, and Roger Sherman and the Trumbulls and the Griswolds—are these to be obliterated from our remembrance? And of the military men of the period—who has not heard of the "wolf catcher?" Who has not heard of the bravery and the military skill of the Putnams? Of the accomplishments, and of the promise of future greatness of the lamented Warren? And of the genius, and the fertility of resource, and the successful energies of the heroic Greene? to whom, though a New England man, the South owes—and generously accords, too—so much of gratitude and praise. Look at "Lee's Memoirs of the War in the Southern Department," and you will rise from that reading, with the full conviction, that not one of the brilliant Marshals of France surpassed, or even equalled him, in all those faculties which go to constitute a great and successful General.

But, it is time this digression were ended. Who were those, I have asked, who, on the seventh day of April, 1788, landed from their bark, the second "Mayflower," and in the spirit of the "Pilgrims of the Plymouth Rock," commenced their bold and romantic work, of forming in the bosom of this then remote wilderness a new commonwealth? You already realize who they were. They were a band of war-worn veterans! They were of those men, officers and soldiers of the Revolution, who had borne the brunt of a fearful contest, with one of the most powerful nations of the world, for eight long years! Men who, upon their country's call, had left their homes

and their respective occupations to stand forward in its defense! Men who had suffered all the miseries that cold and hunger, and want, and absolute destitution could inflict! Men who, side by side, had faced the aggressors of their country in battle until, through indescribable suffering, they had gloriously conquered and driven out the invader, and by the favors of Providence had vindicated the freedom, secured the safety, and established the independence of the country! Would you comprehend the influences which brought these men together and the spirit in which they carried on that contest? Look at them at Bunker Hill, and at the battle of Lexington, and at the crossing of the Delaware, and at the battles of Princeton, and Monmouth, and Saratoga, and Yorktown, and wheresoever else they met the foe! Would you desire to know *how much* they suffered from hunger and destitution, and the inclemencies of the seasons? Look at them in their cold winter quarters at Valley Forge, and their march to the Delaware, and through the Jerseys, and wheresoever they were required to go! And then, when finally the last battle was fought and won, and rumors of approaching peace had reached them, let it be remembered, these same brave men were told they would be disbanded and might go home! Home?—their homes had almost forgotten them, and their old occupations in civil life were gone. With health impaired and fortunes wasted, they were strangers there; *what*, then, would they go home to?

But there was another cause of disquietude—the more afflictive because it was coupled with a deep sense of injustice and of the ingratitude of that country which they had served *so faithfully!* The pittance of their monthly pay as officers and soldiers had for a long time

been in a great measure withholden from them; and what small portion of those monthly wages *had* been discharged, had been paid to them in the *paper money* of that period, which, as the war approached its termination, had become comparatively worthless. They had not even funds to defray the expense of travelling back to their long abandoned firesides! *What*, then, could these brave men do? They who, when oppression and fear had come upon their country had bared their breasts in its defense, and gallantly stood between it and the tyrants who would enslave it? Must they, its true and brave defenders, turn mendicants and *beg* their way? But they had not yet been disbanded; their arms were yet in their hands; their swords were yet at their sides; and acting together, there was nothing in the country that could stand up against them. They might thus render to *themselves* that justice which their country withheld. They might take by force that reasonable subsistence which as yet the country had denied them. *Should they do so?* Dreadful alternative!

Would you look more minutely into this matter? Read again, then, the "Newburg Letters." You will see there the wrongs they endured and the magnitude of the temptations held out to them. Ponder, too, upon the advice given them by their great and noble-hearted chief. Look especially at the course which swayed them at the great assemblage of officers, when met to deliberate upon the course they should pursue; and you will not cease to admire the noble, self-sacrificing spirit which they exhibited; for another conflict awaited them —another victory remained for them to win, more momentous, more glorious than any they had yet achieved —a victory over themselves. Falling back upon their

own integrity—taking counsel of their own patriotism, and rising superior to the great temptation which loomed up before them, they spurned the insidious counsels of the writer of the "Newburg Letters," and trusting in their God, rather than in the delusive promises of what seemed to them an ungrateful country, they calmly, without threats, and without ostentation laid down their arms, suffered themselves to be disbanded, and silently dispersing, made their way through gloomy forebodings of penury and want, to their respective and long neglected homes.

Such were the men *from among whom the first Anglo-Saxon colonists of the old North-West have come;* and surely *it is glorious to boast of such an origin!*

I have ventured to impute to the officers of the Revolutionary Army that they believed that their services were not justly appreciated; and that their long continued efforts and devoted fidelity to the country had been requited by cruel ingratitude. Appearances gave too much color to such imputations. A word of explanation seems appropriate. Large arrearages of pay had long been due to the army, and the amount of suffering which resulted from that delinquency was indescribably great. Petition after petition, couched in the most urgent but respectful terms, had been presented to Congress, beseeching that body to grant relief; but it was all fruitless. The sufferers—officers as well as men—could not obtain from those public functionaries even statements of existing balances, which, if they had possessed them, might, by negotiation, have been made, perhaps, partially available. Yet *that* Congress was the only body that could afford relief, and to that Congress only was the army responsible. The

odium of such cruel delinquency very naturally therefore, attached to that body. Nevertheless, that Congress consisted of great and good men; men who would not willingly have seen that army suffer; who were, in fact, incapable of such *wilful* ingratitude. But they were in that respect powerless. They could, indeed, (three-fourths of the States concurring) make *requisitions* upon the States, demanding of each its proportionate amount of funds, to defray the expenses of that dreadful war; and in behalf of the suffering army, they *did* make and *reiterate* those requisitions; but they were utterly destitute of all means to coerce compliance with them, and they were *not* complied with. The vaunted "State rights" policy then prevailed. A State and the people of a State were not to be *coerced*, even to performance of simple justice, to an army which alone had saved them from utter ruin. As the prospect of a general pacification brightened, the delinquent States became less and less disposed to comply with this duty of justice and of mercy. The paper money of that period, in the control of Congress, had long before been exhausted, and had indeed become utterly worthless; and the arrearages of the army could not be paid. The old confederation, although during the stringent pressure of the war it could be kept together, as that pressure became less intense by the approach of peace, became entirely inefficient; it had come to be called, as you know, gentlemen, "a rope of sand."

But in addition to their small monthly pay, the officers and soldiers of the Continental army, were promised also, what was called their "bounty land," of which the smallest quantity to which each soldier was entitled, was, I think, one hundred acres; and the quantity to

the officers was increased in the proportion of their rank in the army.

When by the peace of 1783, the immense region of "unseated" land, north-west of the Ohio was transferred by Great Britain to the United States; ample means *seemed* to exist to meet the claims of the army, and to redeem the obligation Congress had imposed upon itself, to convey the promised bounty lands. The time for disbanding the army was at hand, and seeing the penury and hardships that awaited them at their old homes, among the hills of New England, and casting their thoughts forward, through the gloom that surrounded them, into the future, the project was started among the troops of the New England lines of obtaining an assignment of their bounty lands in a body, within the region of territory thus required by Congress, and of colonizing it at once. The project became an interesting and a favorite one, and measures were forthwith taken to ascertain if Congress would give its sanction to the plan.

But difficulties were found to exist. They prevented its immediate consummation. That whole region of country was found to be comprehended within the respective limits of the old charters of several of the States. These limits clashed *with each other*, and all were in conflict with that title of the Crown of Great Britain which had been transferred by the treaty to the Union. If the claiming States should persist in their respective pretensions, however unreasonable they might seem, (seeing that *all* the unsettled country, within the national limits—without as well as within the North Western territory, had been acquired and secured by the joint efforts, and treasure, and *blood* of all the States

collectively,) angry contests, which it was of the utmost importance to prevent, would unquestionably arise; the proposed assignment of the "Bounty lands," was postponed; and in an appeal to the justice and magnanimity of the claiming States, (New York, Virginia, Connecticut and Massachusetts, especially,) Congress most earnestly proposed to them that they should at once cede to the Union their respective claims to so much of these unsettled lands as were *within* the North Western Territory. This prudent and conservative measure, so reasonable and so just in itself, was at length, (but with reservations, which still left the claiming States proprietors of immense tracts, without as well as within the N. W. Territory,) fully consummated; and this temporary difficulty being thus removed, the original product of the officers and soldiers of the New England lines, and upon an enlarged plan, was revived.

Gen. Putnam and Gen. Tupper of Massachusetts, first gave renewed impulse to it, by a notice in the public newspapers designating times and places at which those favorable to the plan should meet and agree upon some system of operations. The association of the "Ohio Company" was formed. The proposed common stock of the Company being divided into a thousand or more shares, large numbers of the officers and soldiers of the Revolutionary Army became parties to it. Agents were appointed to prefer anew their application to Congress. Their efforts were successful, and a contract was entered into for the purchase of a million and one-half of acres, upon terms which it was believed were in every respect satisfactory to the Company, while they were at the same time most highly advantageous to the General Government.

The Bounty lands accruing to the officers and soldiers of the army were applied, acre for acre, towards its payment; evidences of the public debt, and the liquidated pecuniary demands of the shareholders, were in like manner so applied. Thus finally removing, in a great measure, those grounds of complaint which had occasioned such deep distress and discontents of so alarming a character.

In other respects, too, the contract was peculiarly gratifying. It provides that throughout the whole tract one mile square in each surveyed township should be conveyed to the Directors of the Company *in trust for various purposes;* that one other mile square in each surveyed township should be conveyed *in trust* for schools; and that two entire townships of six miles square each, should be conveyed in trust for the endowment and support of a University. And seeing the exposed condition of those bold colonists in the depths of the wilderness, and *virtually* in an enemy's country; and considering the national importance of checking in future those predatory incursions of the Indians, which for nearly fifty years before were wont to carry *terror* and *dismay* into the heart of the country, and to mark the whole frontier of Pennsylvania and Virginia with *fire*, and *blood*, and devastation; Congress deemed it proper to direct that a quantity not exceeding one hundred thousand acres, part of the million and one-half so contracted for should be conveyed to the Directors in trust, to be gratuitously granted by them in one hundred acre tracts to such able-bodied men, (members of the Company or not) as should consent to submit to the hardships and incur the hazards of an actual residence there. Thus constituting of those bold adventurers a shield of de-

fense for those exposed and wasted frontiers, more permanently effectual than armies or military posts! For the residue of the entire tract, falling short of a million of acres, it was expected that the Company would pay (principally in army warrants for bounty lands, and in evidences of the public debt as already intimated) at the rate of about two-thirds of a dollar per acre.

Under *such* auspices, this establishment began. Was *tried* courage, was military experience necessary to give security to the embryo colony? The colonists consisted principally of the *veterans* of the Revolution! Were elevated names, was a high grade in military, social, or political life, desirable in order to give greater assurance of safety, and of the future blessing of an *intelligent* and well ordered society? General Putnam and General Tupper, General Parsons and General Varnam, were among them. Colonel Sargent, Colonel Cushing, Colonel Nye, Colonel Meigs, Colonel Oliver, and multitudes, whom it would be useless to numerate, of such as has been officers in the army of the Revolution, among whom were men of finished education—of polished address, and of *high* intellectual attainments, constituted an extraordinary portion of this most extraordinary band of the *first* Anglo-Saxon colonists of your great State. Nevertheless, clouds hung over the infant establishment—its destines were yet shrouded in the future!

But the newly arrived colonists commenced with spirit the work which was before them. Self-protection, they knew to be one of the first injunctions of our nature. In accordance with that injunction, and after erecting a temporary shelter for themselves, they began and accomplished formidable military works upon an

elevated piece of ground commanding the surrounding plain. They were of ample dimensions, and contained block-houses and barracks sufficient for the accommodation and protection of all the families in the upper part of the growing city. They were surrounded by a double row of palisades, and by a frowning array of firmly anchored abattis; and constructed under the artistic eye of the veterans of the late army, these works—modernly called "the stockade," might proudly have bid defiance to the whole congregated masses of the savages of the North-West.

The lower, or commercial part of the incipient town, at the junction of the two rivers, was defended by three or four well built block-houses. One of which was upon the border of each of the two rivers; and the other upon the outer lines of a semi-circular course of high and substantial pickets, set deep and firmly in the ground, and which, surrounding the dwellings and buildings within that *inhabited* section of the town, connected from river to river, the different block-houses constructed for its protection. Nor were the military habits of the colonists at all forgotten, nor pretermitted. The militia was organized at an early period; and under the immediate command of that most gallant and accomplished officer, Colonel Ebenezer Sproat, (of the Rhode Island line;) the men were mustered, guards were posted, and the whole were kept under as perfect drill as other indispensable avocations of busy life would permit.

The military works were too formidable to be attacked, but the Indians were hovering about them, watching for their prey. The small fields adjoining the residences of the inhabitants, and their lines of

pickets, and which, for their support, they were obliged to cultivate, it was not prudent to approach, unless fully armed. They were accustomed to work them alternately, in companies, helping one another; and while some were at work, others were keeping guard; for the most untiring vigilance was necessary, to guard against surprise, and secret ambush, and murderous assaults upon any who might, incautiously, be led beyond the reach of instant support.

Those trials have happily passed away, and I hasten to other topics. "Of all dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports." So we are very gravely admonished in the "*Farewell Address.*" But, though wisely and opportunely said, yet to a *New Englander*, there was no novelty in the sentiment. The axiom was at the foundation of the whole policy of the early Puritans. It was the stimulating principle of the "Pilgrims of the Plymouth Rock." *They* knew that no people who disregarded the impulses of religion, and who habitually allowed themselves to forget their responsibility to God, were ever permitted, since the world began, to enjoy uninterrupted prosperity. All history, both sacred and profane, confirms this momentous fact. The agents of the Company were not forgetful of the admonition this grave sentiment conveyed. They accordingly urged upon Congress—as that body of great and good men regarded the well-being and the future prosperity of those bold and adventurous colonists, and thus, under *their* auspices, were about to enter upon so hazardous an experiment—that they would make the munificent provision which has been mentioned, of granting, viz: one mile square in each surveyed township, making in all more I

suppose (I do not know how much more) than forty thousand acres of land for religious purposes. This grant was made freely and cheerfully, I believe; and superadded to that, and to the honor of that wise and provident body be it said, an equal quantity was granted for the support of schools, forever, within the limits of the purchase; and a yet larger quantity for the endowment of a Universy. Without intelligence, how could those free institutions of government, in the support of which they had so long and so earnestly contended, be duly appreciated? Without a general diffusion of knowledge among the masses, how could they be fitted for self-government, and for the exercise of those high powers which political equality and freedom confer? Hardly, therefore, had those colonists become settled in their new abodes, when those who had control of their affairs, had taken measures in regard to both those vitally important objects. The services of an amiable young clergyman, (the Rev. Mr. Story,) had been secured for the colony, and he soon arrived among them. In the clangor of arms, "The laws," 'tis said, "are silent." It is not so of the proper exercise of religious duties. Every Sabbath the militia was duly mustered for parade; and it is among the earliest recollections of my boyhood, to have seen them, to my special admiration and wonder, marching, "armed to the teeth"—with measured step, and by the sound of the drum and fife, to the largest of the central block-houses, where divine service with all due solemnity, was regularly performed. Cromwell admonished his Puritan soldiers, in the olden time, that whenever they attended divine service, (as they were always accustomed scrupulously to do,) at the same time "to take care and keep

their powder dry." The colonists acted in the spirit of that order; for who could know at what moment an alarm of "Indians," might be given? It was incumbent upon them, therefore, at *all times* to be prepared; and when, in a body, they attended church, they came fully armed and duly marshalled as if for battle. But other cares were not forgotten. The schoolmaster should not be behind the time; and blessed be the memory of those who first transplanted into the Great West the New England system of popular education! That was a system *sui generis*. There was nothing like it: and to a free people, who would seek to preserve their freedom through all future time, in its pristine purity and vigor, it was indispensable. What organized band of Puritans, indeed, have been known to migrate without the schoolmaster in their train? The school lands had not yet become available; but other resources were applied; and from the first establishment of the colony there was no want unsupplied, of well-conducted schools. The blockhouses at "the point" were built, as I have already stated, as places of protection, and as means of defense. One of them was usually occupied on the Sabbath, as a house of prayer. It was not an undue desecration of it, I think, that on *other* days it should be used for a school. A Mr. Baldwin a graduate, I believe, of one of the eastern colleges, sent out I suppose by the provident curators of the colony as a teacher, kept school there. Under *his* encouraging tuition, (for I was one of his little pupils,) I was myself enabled to blunder through some of the elementary rules of grammar, and to struggle through with varying success against that formidable monster the multiplication table. He was an amiable man, and much beloved by all his pupils; and withal,

at least in *their* untutored judgments, he was a man of prodigious learning:—

> And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew,
> That one small head could carry all he knew!

Where this gentleman moved to and what was his ultimate destiny, I do not know.

At "the stockade," higher branches of learning were taught, for a time at least, by Major Anselm Tupper, of the old Revolutionary army. This gentleman had the reputation of being a superior classical scholar, as certainly he possessed a refined and polished address. As the population of the colony expanded, and its settlements within the purchase increased in number, means of education were everywhere abundantly provided, and everywhere within the purchase, the badge of a New England people was visible.

Fellow-citizens, I have thus had something to say concerning the *origin* of that colonial establishment which you have this day assembled to commemorate. I have had something to say concerning the general character of those good and brave men who had the boldness to conceive, and the untiring perseverance to consummate so momentous an undertaking. I hope that what I have said will bear investigation, and be found sustained by the truth. I have also endeavored to trace the foot-prints of those men in the measures they pursued to guard against hostile attack, and to secure the safety of their infant establishment; in their endeavors to secure to the incoming population the enduring benefits of a religious cast of character, and to establish among them the New England system of universal education. There remains but one topic more to which I desire, briefly, to advert, before I close a

course of remarks which, I fear, has already taxed your patience too much.

Among all the plans of political organization which the wit of man has ever devised, to prepare and fit a *religious and intelligent* people for the management and control of a *free*, republican government, such as ours was *intended* to be; there is no one, I think, at all comparable with that which subdivides your whole country into small political communities, called "towns," or "townships," and vests in the inhabitants of each, when assembled in general meetings, the power to regulate, and, subject only to the provisions of the general law, to control their own internal police and prudential affairs. Thus constituting in fact, of every neighborhood in the State, a distinct and separate government of its own, purely democratic in its character, and in which *all* electors, inhabitants of the town, may *personally* and freely participate.

This is, in no wise, the wild speculation of a political dreamer. The system has been tested by the experience of some two hundred years, throughout the New England States; and its usefulness, and entire safety, by that experience, has been fully established. These little communities, indeed, bear relations to the State very similiar to those which the States bear to the General Government, though less complex, and far less exposed to the danger of being brought into conflict with the paramount authority. The manner in which they may perform their respective functions, is prescribed by the general law of the State, and is plain and simple. The qualified voters of the town being assembled, are requested to form themselves into a regular deliberative body; a chairman or *presiding* officer is ap-

pointed by the voters present, (unless some officer of the town should be there, whose duty it may be, *ex-officio*, to preside,) a clerk also is appointed; and competent number of constables, or other peace officers, are required to be in attendance, whose duty it is, under the control of the presiding officers, to preserve order, and to enforce obedience to the commands of the body.

This deliberative assembly, when thus fully organized, generally takes cognizance of all those local matters which peculiarly concern the comfort, the convenience, the health, the safety, the pecuniary interests, and the general *well-being* of their little community. The ordinary topics of discussion and of consideration which come before them, regard principally, perhaps, the establishment of local schools, the selection and compensation of teachers, and the operation generally of the educational system of the country, the granting and the revocation of licenses for taverns, ferries, etc., the regulation of estrays and of pounds, the making of adequate provision for the poor, for the construction of bridges, for the repair of highways, and the levying, collection, and disbursement of public taxes for these and for analagous purposes; the appointment also of local officers, and the regulation and enforcement of their proper accountability; in short, the entire local economy and police of the town, constitute very properly subjects for the action and final regulation of these organized communities.

An organized "town meeting," thus formed, becomes in fact both theoretically and practically a regular deliberative body—a local Legislature—a *Congress in miniature*—being subject in the transactions of business to

the *same* rules, governed by the same parliamentary laws, having all the same characteristics, and performing but within more restricted limits, the *same* functions as those more elevated bodies. In *all* the deliberations of these deliberative assemblies and in all the discussions which take place before them, *all* the qualified members of the community, *young and old, have a right to participate.* And what a field for the first development of genius; what a theater for the exercise and display of eloquence in debate; what a fund of useful knowledge on subjects connected with the *public affairs* of the country is here opened, almost at every man's door, to the young and the aspiring statesman!

Such was the New England plan of "town meetings." What possible contrivance can be imagined so admirably calculated to familiarize all men with the public business of the country; to accustom the young and the old to the forms of deliberative assemblies; to fit them all, according to their respective capacities for Legislators, and indeed for all the higher grades of public life?

Interwoven as this system was with all the machinery of their government at home, and so congenial as it manifestly was both in theory and practical operation with those principles of political freedom and of self-government in which they had been educated and for which they had so long and so earnestly contended, it was quite natural that the colonists should desire to adopt it and plant it *deeply* among the fundamental establishments of the nascent commonwealth. They *did* so desire; and with a lively interest they looked forward for the future solution of the problem whether here, in the "far West," they might hope to see that system take root again. But they must abide their time. A

majority of the Judges of the Territory appointed by the General Government, it will be remembered, were of New England. They had not the power to "*make laws;*" but jointly with the Governor they were required to adopt such, from the codes of the original States, as in their discretion might seem to them appropriate. Accordingly, and at an early period, they adopted a law which purported to vest in the Courts of Quarter Sessions, the authority to *divide* their respective counties into political townships, and to clothe them with many of those corporate and municipal powers the "towns" in New England were accustomed to exercise. This initiatory step was important, and of great promise. But while the *Indian war* continued but little if any progress could be made in developing and establishing the plan.

Following closely in the wake of the Ohio Company, J. C. Symmes and his associates effected a large purchase of land between the Miamis, comprising the region in which Cincinnati now looms up—"the Queen City of the West!" The terms upon which the purchase was made were very similar to those of the Ohio Company's purchase. The settlers upon it were principally from New Jersey. Its prosperity and rapid advances in population were very greatly promoted by the concentration there, for many years, of the North-Western armies. The expeditions of Harmar, St. Clair, and of Wayne, respectively, moved from that point. The extensive region between the Scioto and the Little Miami had hardly yet begun to be settled; nor had the migrations from Connecticut yet made successful progress in forming their establishments upon the "Western Reserve" of that State. But the battle of 1794

opened a new era. The proud spirit of the native Indian was broken. Quietude and security pervaded the forests and the prairies, and peace smiled upon their borders. These migrating parties, slowly at first, and cautiously feeling their way, began to penetrate the country in all directions; *then* emigrants from Virginia and from Maryland spread themselves over the rich valleys of the Scioto and the Little Miami. Connecticut sent her spirited sons, also, to domiciliate themselves upon her "Western Reserve." The Keystone State peopled rapidly the counties of Belmont and Jefferson; and a dense population poured over the wide-spread country all around, like a flood. Already the Yankees were outnumbered, and scarcely exceeded one-third the entire population of that which is the State now. The favorite measure of the first, the pioneer adventurers, was in danger of defeat at last.

But, when has Yankee perseverance been known to falter? The inhabitants of the river counties above were opposed to the plan; it was unknown to them; why should they try new experiments? They were men of routine. They had long practiced upon the axiom that it is wise to "let well-enough alone!" The opposition of the people of the Scioto Valley was more active and vehement. They had heard perhaps of Yankee speculations in "wooden nutmegs." They opposed the plan with bitterness. Derision and mockery were their weapons when calm reasoning failed, and when the system seemed likely to be fastened upon the country, they sought to make it matter of burlesque, and sneeringly to propose that the Yankees of Washington county should send over to them *experts*, to teach them how to organize and conduct "a Yankee town meeting."

Though too young then to take part in the political affairs of the country, I was *not* too young to take some notice of passing events and to sympathize with my brother Yankees in their final triumph in this matter. The New Englanders of the "Reserve" furnished a host in support of the plan; and the New Jersey emigrants of Hamilton county assimilated themselves more naturally with the Yankees in all their policy. They united in countenancing this measure and it was adopted. Then it became indeed "*un fait accompli.*" The Yankees triumphed; and now, that the system has long since found a place in the political machinery of the country, let it be fortified, and enlarged, and embellished; let it be made what in its origin it was designed to be—the monitor and the friend of *self-government;* a school for young statesmen; at once the birth-place, the nurse, and the *home* of the free!

But important as it may be that we should strengthen, and enlarge, and protect this beautiful feature in your political organism, yet, my friends, let us faithfully remember that the *forms* of freedom may exist *without the substance;* and that no true and national liberty can long exist among *any* people, unless combined with a widely diffused intelligence and with a deep and pervading sense of our moral and religious responsibility to that God who was the great Architect of the Universe, and its only present supporter!